A Review of festivals, events, attractions, and other activities in British Columbia with regard to their support and development towards enhancement of the tourism product.

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Executive Summary

Tourism is British Columbia's second leading source of revenue. It is "The New Resource." The tourism industry has experienced steady growth and success. Eventually, it may be the province's largest revenue source. Still, there is evidence which suggests that it is being under-exploited and that the potential is significantly greater than that which is being realized.

Research indicates that the consumer perception of British Columbia is not only inaccurate but also tends to appeal to the market segment with the least growth and revenue potential. If the research is reliable, a major opportunity is being limited by a serious communication problem.

The nature of the tourism product has evolved swiftly in recent years. There is an opportunity to significantly broaden the market base, but to exploit this opportunity, a radical shift in consumer perception must be effected.

Research indicates that the existing perception which continues to be re-inforced is primarily that of an isolated wilderness. Yet the growth opportunity lies primarily in the market segment who desire a mixed touring or urban cultural experience.

The unexploited component of the tourism resource is the remarkably high level of human creative energy to be found in the urban areas of British Columbia. These are the unusually rich experiences of festivity and cultural celebration in a safe, clean and picturesque setting. This combination is virtually unduplicated in North America and is tailor-made for the desired target group yet it remains largely uncommunicated.

The research evidence also suggests that the role of the cultural activity in British Columbia should be re-assessed. Potentially, it could be the key component in achieving the perceptual shift required to attract the more lucrative segment of the potential market.

The existing Supernatural image has been excellently communicated. In fact, it is so strongly entrenched that it is not considered vulnerable. According to the Ministry's research consultants, it would be safe to exclusively pursue the upscale "urban experience" market for a very extended period, perhaps decades, without eroding the hinterland promise. Neither would an urban emphasis lessen the outdoor tourism business. Rather, it will create a wider gateway for a significantly wider market base.

To accomplish the shift in perception, a stronger identity must be created. While it is certainly possible to have a quality urban/cultural experience in British Columbia, most Americans do not currently hold that belief. In order to significantly shift their existing perception of mountains and wilderness, it is necessary to create equally memorable imagery of the urban cultural experience. To do this, much high-impact visual enhancement of the events and attractions is required.

In order to be able to position Vancouver as a "must-see" urban destination, the city must convey a clear image which achieves high awareness. Vancouver is uniquely festive and culturally energetic in tourist season but this is difficult to convey. To do so, it must dress for the part. It needs "visual packaging."

Expo 86 was an example of a adequate product which was delivered in particularly strong visual packaging. Taken individually, the various elements of Expo 86 were not particularly innovative or new. It was the overall visual presentation strategy that made the exposition so highly marketable and altered the visitor perception of the intrinsic offering. The same principles of visual packaging can be applied to the urban festivity throughout the province with much the same high impact effect on the desired tourism target segment.

There is a shortlist of exemplary festivals, events, and attractions which not only meet the basic criteria of excellence, but more importantly epitomize the unique quality of British Columbia. These are experiences which appeal to the desired target segment yet cannot be duplicated closer to where they live.

These few uniquely British Columbian phenomena offer the should be favoured for development and support of strong visual packaging in order to be communicated as memorable symbols of the festive urban/cultural tourism experience available.

There is also a secondary shortlist of other festivals, events, and attractions with enormous potential but in need of additional product development prior to being packaged for tourism marketing purposes.

In the realm of possibility, there are a great number of event concepts which do not presently exist but offer development opportunities in the long term. Several of these are also outlined in this review.

The opportunity is fairly clear but the process is complex and perhaps impossible without an instrument of implementation. To achieve this objective in a quick and comprehensive manner, the involvement of government is essential.

Such involvement is difficult for two reasons. Because the new opportunity essentially involves the development and marketing of fun, a radical philosophical shift is required if government is to play a leadership role.

Secondly, the prime target group seek an urban cultural experience. By definition, this product is best delivered by the cities and specifically by the Lower Mainland. Despite the province-wide spinoff that would be realized through the attraction of this mixed-experience tourist market, the process might seem inequitable. It must, therefore, be approached prudently. From a political standpoint, this project could likely be most comfortably positioned as a gradual and long-term development initiative of Economic Region Two.

The key to understanding the specific nature of the strategy is in drawing the distinction beween its objectives and those of earlier attempts at marketing culture and the arts in British Columbia. This strategy is not concerned with the marketing of specific cultural events or the direct funding process. Instead, it proposes to use the high levels of festive, artistic, and celebratory activity as a generic tool in order to radically shift an entrenched perception which is likely costing dearly in potential tourism revenue. And finally, in order to achieve this shift, the strategy proposes that the visual communication of this activity, the actual festivity that can be photographed and filmed, must be enhanced and intensified to the point where it carries the same level of marketing impact as did the Supernatural landscape.

What is needed is an "instrument of implementation" to develop and support existing "phenomena" and a gradual, long-term development of the other opportunities, as well as a Marketing Strategy which will convey an image and awareness of the product.

It is recommended that the Ministry take the lead in creating an event enhancement capability. A workable structure could be a task force combining a private sector consultant resources with bodies of authority from both the Ministry and the city. Working together they would undertake the following basic objectives:

(1) To facilitate the enhancement of events, attractions, and urban festive aesthetics with specific reference to tourism marketing objectives through a co-ordinating mechanism established by the Ministry in order to deal with all requests and enquiries concerning activities of the nature described in the Review.

(2) To encourage the application of government funding to this objective when it does not otherwise lessen the quality of the basic product and to establish a special funding program which would provide asssistance for consultation on planning and production of visual and environmental enhancement.

(3) To, through the Development Division of the Ministry, determine development opportunities for municipal and/or corporate visibility in such projects and to stimulate interest in providing expertise or financial assistance.

(4) To continue research and concept refinement in order to identify those activities which the Ministry feels will have the greatest potential for successful achievement.

(5) To initiate a pilot project with a selected number of festivals, events, and attractions and target a specifically identified promotional market.

(6) To refer the project to individual Regional Economic zones for consideration by the Minister of State and his advisory committees.

Background

In late 1986, the Ministry of Tourism absorbed the branches of government responsible for cultural, recreation and heritage activities in British Columbia. In simple terms, it might be observed that while Tourism performed a marketing function, the absorbed branches tended to be primarily funding agencies.

The Ministry formed a task force to undertake an examination of the resulting interrelationship with a view to identifying areas of opportunity. Specifically, from the point of view of the Ministry, one fundamental step was to examine the cultural, recreation and heritage activities with a view to how they might strengthen the overall tourism product offering and thus mutually benefit from the resulting mix.

Put another way, that which had previously been seen only as a grant-giving process might now be more positively viewed as an investment opportunity, with a clear likelihood of measurable dividends to the provincial economy.

The author of this document was contracted as a member of the Ministry task force. The initial assignment was to undertake a general review and familiarization of cultural, recreational, and hertitage attractions and events within the province in order to lend a creative perspective to the project.

This consultant is neither a researcher nor an economist and thus, as directed, this review was undertaken purely in the context of a specific field of expertise which is marketing-oriented creative concept development. The experience as Creative Director of Expo 86, responsible for the concept and design guidelines for the look, feel, content, and thus much of the marketability of the exposition is directly applied to this review. One given reason for the appointment was the effect that Expo 86 had on the visitor's perception of British Columbia and the possibilty that there may be an opportunity to apply some of the more successful Expo planning principles on a wider basis.

The observations and recommendations to follow, therefore, propose possibilities which may offer a fresh perspective on the value of festivals and other cultural activities in British Columbia and the role they may play in the broadening marketing opportunities we face.

Objectives

The specific objectives of this report are to examine the development and enhancement opportunities of cultural, recreational, and heritage activities of the province from the point of view of tourism marketability. Also, to establish criteria and evaluation guidelines, and to recommend policy regarding the development and support of these resources.

The full contractual mandate reads as follows:" (a) to act as a member of a Ministry Task Force to establish a strategy for the development of existing and proposed festivals, special events or activities which will enhance tourism and provide a resource for economic growth in the province. (b) to assist in the development of a model which will establish criteria and guidelines for a system of evaluation and assessment for future festival development. (c) to assist in the planning of long range development of new concepts and opportunities, and project future trends in this area. (d) to assist in the development of a marketing strategy to attract new visitors to festivals, and to develop a rationale and criteria for Ministry involvement. (e) to prepare an inventory and analysis of existing festivals. (f) to assist in the preparation of a final report. (g) to provide such other services as may be assigned, from time to time, by the Minister."

Thesis

Tourism is British Columbia's second largest industry. It is generally conceded that if trends continue, it will eventually become the largest. Indeed, the service sector currently employs over two-thirds of the British Columbia workforce.

In this traditionally resource-based province, Tourism might be viewed as The New Resource. By regarding Tourism and all of its components, particularly its "cultural" components, as analagous to other resource industries, we are able to apply a more objective perspective to its intrinsic value and future economic potential.

Based on the Ministry's admittedly limited research to date, there appears to be some evidence that this most important resource is not being fully exploited.

The Ministry's US research consultant has suggested that the "Supernatural" sell of the outdoors tends to appeal to a market segment which has neither the greatest growth potential or the most money to spend. Conversely, he indicates that the the market segment which could deliver the most benefit to the provincial economy and has the most potential for growth is actually being turned off by the current marketing thrust.

Furthermore, The First Time Visitor's Survey indicates that for many first time tourists, actually experiencing the province firsthand was considered far more rewarding than the visitor had anticipated. Many had underestimated the product offering and this was particularly true in the area of urban experience and amenities. This suggests a communication problem.

It would seem, therefore, that the door is open to broaden the market base by appealing to the group identified as the opinion leaders, as the people with the most money to spend, and as the best growth opportunity for tourism in British Columbia. The expert advice given is that this can best be accomplished by a radical shift in the consumer promise to a more energetic, urban, upscale, cultural and festive product offering.

The festive events and celebration inherent in the cultural, recreational, and heritage activities of this province appear to have the basic ingredients to effect this shift of perception.

Scope of Research

In that earlier studies have provided much of the hard data on the funding of festivals and the other cultural activities, it is not the intent of this review to duplicate that research. Rather, the objective is to seek new opportunities and possibilities and to recommend a strategy for the development of festivals and other events in terms of their potential enhancement of the tourism product.

Due to the timing of this project and the multiplicity of activities, it has been impossible to to directly review every event or to interview every player in the process. Still, a broad enough cross-section of the activities and personalities have been experienced and interviewed to provide solid background for the thesis and conclusions.

Although the project as originally defined was to focus on a policy towards festivals in British Columbia, it has been broadened to encompass all which might be regarded as activities of festivity, celebration, culture and human creative activity.

The Marketing Context

While this review was commissioned by the Development Section of the Ministry of Tourism in order to assist in the formulation of a development strategy, it will be presented in a marketing context. The objective is to seek development for marketability.

This review examines what appears to be an unexploited marketing opportunity. Hopefully, it documents the obvious.

As per the mandate, this review differs somewhat from the earlier reports on festivals. For the most part, it applies the single criterion of usefulness to the tourism marketing program. There is, therefore, less concern with artistic merit or financial and managerial stability. All elemements are viewed in terms of potential ability to enhance the basic perception of the tourism product offering.

Also, the review seeks to reposition the importance of festivals, events, and other such festive and celebratory attractions as key factors in the future economic growth of the province.

The review is based on a simple premise. Tourism is the resource of the future. The province itself is unique. This resource is eternally renewable. It is unlikely to ever plummet in value on the world market as do other resources. It is clean and lucrative, and it is easily enhanced.

Existing research indicates that the consumer perception of this tourism resource is of a predominantly outdoor vacation offering. The First Time Visitors Study conducted during Expo 86 confirmed suspicions that the urban experience and high level of cultural and celebratory activity available in British Columbia was largely underestimated or unknown. The high levels of culture, energy, human activity and friendliness were discovered with some surprise by these first time guests, particularly those from the United States.

This is not to suggest that the Ministry's Marketing Section or the advertising agencies are not working towards this end. In the 1987-1988 Marketing Plan, the opportunity is clearly stated. "We know that our scenery is a primary attraction to a broad target of travelers. The friendly helpful manner and openness of our people is another almost universal attraction. Our safe 'clean and green' cities and the cultural and urban experiences they have to offer are yet more things that can be instrumental in netting increased visits from many of the major markets."

There is, however, compelling evidence that our "safe, clean and green" cities and "the cultural and urban experiences" may be far more than a mere incremental factor. They may be the key to the future growth of the tourism industry.

At an August, 1987 presentation to the Ministry, U.S. tourism marketing consultant Stanley Plog reported on his research project involving upscale San Francisco and Los Angeles travellers. While his research findings must be viewed in the context of tourism market segmentation, the implications of some serious existing misconceptions were nevertheless made rather clear.

Mr. Plog described two basic types of traveller which he called the Psychocentrics and the Allocentrics.

As he explained it, the Psychocentrics are the typical Winnibago campers. They are territorially bound and do not like to travel too far. They have generalized anxieties about the ouside world. They prefer the safe and familiar and like to bring their belongings with them in the camper. They tend to be low activity people. They like to drive. They are the "rubber tire" trade. They lack self confidence and therefore, the sense of adventure. They will go to the well-worn vacation spot because they perceive it as safe.

They fear cultural differences. They have a profound sense of powerlessness about their lives and will not try new things. They like safe vacations in the sun.

These Psychocentrics do not spend very much money, they are not the opinion leaders, they do not represent the province's growth opportunity, and British Columbia will continue to get them whether or not they are pursued.

Conversely, as Mr. Plog describes them, the Allocentrics are quite different. They seek discovery, particularly if they feel they have made the discovery before the masses do so. They personalize their vacations to their intellectual interests. They like novel destinations. They are high activity people who much prefer to fly to a destination. They don't seek a packaged, predictible, "safe" vacation. They want to learn and experience. They enjoy a different culture. They are younger, better educated, and while they may come only once, and then not again for years, they are opinion leaders who influence others.

The Allocentrics spend far more money, they represent the clear growth opportunity for British Columbia's tourism industry, and the experience which they seek, and could find, is not being communicated, according to the existing research.

In fact, this research suggests that only part of the British Columbia tourism offering is being communicated. The US consultant believes that the resulting perception appeals to the less dersirable and less lucrative market segment. The only conclusion can be that the prime tourist market is presently being left largely untapped.

"No more mountains," Mr.Plog stressed, "We have had enough of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald!" He cited the example of recent Australian tourism advertising which has "eliminated the kangaroos" and stressed the urban, cultural experience. The success of this strategy is self-evident, considering the current popularity of Australia as a tourist destination. He also cited the success experienced in Quebec and Ontario by the elimination of wilderness imagery in favour of the more urban and cultural experience. These strategical shifts are, of course, clearly directed at the Allocentric market segment.

Mr. Plog agrees that the current perception is not vulnerable. He assures that the "Unspoiled Wilderness" image is so entrenched in the consciousness of the target market that it would be possible to "not show another mountain for generations" without suffering significant effect. Perhaps this is a little overstated but it does suggest some major opportunities.

What this does mean is that however strong the focus on the friendly, safe, and cosmopolitan urban experience, it does not endanger the awareness of British Columbia's wilderness offering. More important, because the existing perception is not vulnerable, the upcountry economy which is so dependent on the selling of the outdoor vacation is not threatened by even the most focussed shift of emphasis. There is no danger, for decades to come, of eroding the SuperNatural consumer promise. There is, however, a real opportunity to create within our cosmopolitan cities a far more inviting portal to hinterland British Columbia.

As an aside, Mr.Plog makes a point which seems significant. He says that information gleaned from data cards which may tend to support the existing perception should be taken lightly. Data cards tend to be filled out by older Pscycocentrics with much time on their hands and therefore the information thus gained does not come from a reliable research population.

In the research conclusions, the following points are stressed. The target California audience should be high energy Allocentrics and the image of British Columbia presented to these people should be consistant with their interests. Vancouver is an interesting destination. There is a sense of uniqueness here. British Columbia and especially its cities of Vancouver and Victoria provide a unique opportunity for Americans to experience foriegn tradition mixed with a very contemporary feel. There is an opportunity for self-discovery and self-exploration. The British image is a very positive factor.

More points: De-emphasize the great outdoors. The mountains, lakes, streams, beautiful skies and clean air are of less interest to Allocentric persons. The outdoors should become a backdrop to other more exciting features of British Columbia and its cities. Reach for higher educational levels. Allocentrics are the "movers and shakers" who influence a larger circle of friends to follow in their footsteps. Thus, the travel base can expand in the natural progression of time.

Such a shift of emphasis would have to phased over a considerable period of time. To be acceptable to the rural and upcountry population, the benefits of establishing a broader market base through the creation of a more inviting urban gateway would have to be clearly communicated.

For the most part, Mr. Plog's research supports the thesis of this review and vise versa. Not everyone wants a Supernatural vacation. Many upscale tourists desire an mixed experience with a stimulating urban/cultural component. There is the potential of providing a product to satisfy these desires which could be unique in North America and perhaps the world. There is in British Columbia the foundations for an offering of festivity, creative energy, and cultural diversion which, combined with the outstanding natural phenomena of the environment, and the safety, cleanliness, and amenities of the our cities, could provide one of most compelling tourism offerings on earth.

British Columbia has produced some of the finest tourism advertising found anywhere and there are many accolades to attest to its high quality. It has solidly established a strong perception of the province as an attractive travel destination. If, however, the research findings are to be accepted, the clear implication is that what was previously believed to be the appropriate and natural image for the province may no longer be accurate or indeed, desirable.

Much about British Columbia has evolved radically in recent years and this was particularly true of 1986. It would be fair to say that the province has been undergoing a rapid refinement process and now has the potential of delivering a quite different tourism product. It also has the potential to create a different perception designed to motivate an expanded and significantly more profitable market opportunity.

The images that have characterized British Columbia over the years, at least those that have apparantly shaped its perception, have been depictions of tranquility, isolation, and sheer natural grandeur. They have tended to promise the luxury of space and oneness with the unspoiled wilderness. As the research indicates, they have been very effective to that end.

There is, however, another component to the tourism resource which has emerged almost suddenly, is highly desired by the new growth segment of the market, and has, according to research, apparantly yet to be effectively communicated.

That component is the sheer energy and festivity of the human cultural activity and celebration that infuses our cities. We are a province of celebrations and festivals. Considering the population base, the quality and variety of these events are quite remarkable, as is the aesthetics of our urban streetscape decor. Because the cities have such comparatively high concentrations of this desirable activity, some critical mass is achieved and the sense of urban exhilaration is pervasive.

Add to this the remarkable level of cleanliness and safety which make our cities so liveable and relatively carefree. Few inner cities of North America can instill the sense of freedom with security that one discovers in Vancouver and Victoria. The combination is a rare and very desirable one.

While the streets of our cities are exhilarating and comfortable environments, it is really the organized celebrations such as the festivals which provide the strongest expression of our unique urban personality. The festivals, events, attractions and culture are key elements of this unexploited component of the resource. And again, while some gestures have been made to communicate this, the phenomenon of the urban energy of British Columbia does not appear to be a significant factor in the existing perception.

There are too many Americans who believe that British Columbia is just more of Wyoming but farther to get to. In fact, is everything that can be found in the American wilderness but it is also so much more.

The product exists. A visit to Vancouver quickly dispels any notion that British Columbia is nothing more than an isolated wilderness. It is a sophisticated society with first class cultural, heritage, entertainment, sports and celebratory offerings.

The Unexploited Resource

Though it may signal otherwise, this review is not leading towards a recommendation of funding support for cultural activities on the basis that they will draw tourist audiences. In fact, the opposite position is taken. It is not the individual festivals, events and attractions of this province which will, in themselves, motivate the upscale traveller to visit British Columbia. In all likelihood, that category of tourist knows how to find equal if not better such presentations much closer to home.

So it is important here to clarify the specific nature of the unexploited resource compenent being identified and in doing so, to emphasize that this is not another appeal for generalized funding support for the arts.

The issue at hand is not how many tourists we can entice to our festivals.

Rather it is how effectively the communication and the building of an awareness of our remarkably high level of cultural and festive activity can alter the hinterland perception of the British Columbian experience and thus alter the profile of our visitors?

The opportunity has less to do with the state of the arts than with the unique quality of the intrinsic human creative energy found in this very alive and dynamic province in general and the cities in particular. It is important to keep this distinction clearly in mind in order to appreciate the thrust of this review and its recommended strategy.

The summer of 1986 introduced a new dimension to the perception of British Columbia. For those who visited the province for the first time, the level of excitement and sophistication was far more than they had ever imagined. While it is true that 1986 was an unusual year, the first time visitors also discovered levels of unexpected human cultural activity outside the Expo site that they did not expect to find in this province. To some degree, this was also true for many British Columbians visiting Vancouver. The escalating sense of energy and involvement, the sheer mulitiplicity of events and celebrations seems to have reached a plateau which has created an undeniably unique quality to our urban life.

Significantly, it is not really necessary to attend these festivals and events to sense the vitality of our cities. There is in the air an atmosphere of constant celebration. The catalyst for this is, perhaps, the general belief among British Columbians that they are gifted with one of the world's most idyllic environments and lifestyles. This joy must surely by shared by visitors because the exhilaration is always in the air and such is true of very few other places.

To further illustrate the distinction between the generic and the specific, it might be useful to refer to an earlier report on festivals to clarify the philosophical differences.

In its recommendation for a festival funding package, The Wootten Study cited compelling reasons for a policy of governmental support to such activities. "Festivals improve the quality of life in British Columbia for audiences, the community, industry, and artists." That conclusion is likely true, perhaps axiomatic. "Because our province, as beautiful as it may be, is geographically isolated from other parts of the world, a festival policy has every opportunity to encourage Canadian and International attractions and to showcase our own strong artistic talent on an international stage beside the world's best." That is also likely true. "For all these reasons, and more, festivals are attractive to corporations and government. Sizeable financial support to a high-profile festival can bring public recognition and appreciation to corporations and government who give that support."

This review accepts those observations as givens. It is surely better for a society to have financially healthy cultural activity than not. The multiplier effect cited in the study is another compelling factor. But all of these popints, while lending support to the issues of this review, are beside its essential thrust.

The statement in the Wootten summary which is most revealing reads as follows: "While festivals do not apparently attract a sizeable enough number of tourists to drive a promotional campaign, a significant segment of British Columbia tourists do attend festivals. Therefore, it is worthwhile to include festivals in tourist marketing."

What, exactly, does this tell us? Festivals do not draw tourists. They are not, at the moment, a primary reason to visit. But some tourists do, once here, attend festivals. Therefore, if additional tourism marketing dollars were positioned against specific cultural events, it is doubtful that such initiatives could justify the incremental cost.

Chris Wootten`s rationale for marketing support of festivals has an apologetic ring because there is difficulty in producing the hard numbers to rationalize the marketing support of cultural tourism. But do the numbers matter?

This review agrees that urban cultural activities should be a major component of tourism marketing. It also takes the position that attendance figures have little to do with the measuring the effectiveness of that strategy. For the most part, these events will remain largely local and regional presentations for mainly local and regional audiences. The actual body count of tourists attending cultural events is not as important as the effectiveness of using the imagery of these events to alter the existing perceptions of the city and province.

This review is concerned exclusively with the ultimate usefulness of all that cultural activity as a marketing tool. It accepts the points made in the Wootten Study, as well as agreeing with the recommendation for marketing support of the cultural events. The rationale, however, is quite different.

Culture is good for tourism marketing primarily because it provides visible ammunition to refute the notion that British Columbia is an backwoods hinterland with no redeeming urban experience. Culture is good for tourism because it, more than any other single stimulus, symbolizes the urban creativity and energy that will motivate the most desirable tourism market.

The potential is enormous. Beyond being positioned as one of the most beautiful and natural tourism destinations, as it is now, British Columbia can also be positioned as one of the most exciting.

Again, this province is far more than a silent, scenic wilderness. It also offers a remarkably colourful, vital, energetic and urbane menu of cultural and festive activity. That offering is the uncommunicated, unsold, and unexploited component of the new resource. This compelling dimension has somehow been excluded from the perception communicated to the target market. The reason seems clear. The ground level human scale excitement and activity simply hasn't been giftwrapped in a marketable form.

Packaging the Resource

One question which might be begged is this: If the urban vitality of our cities is so appealing to the most desirable target market, why is the research indicating that it has not been effectively communicated in the marketing program? The answer which follows is conjecture.

The aesthetic of the geography of this province is so spectacular and overwhelming that it may have always been assumed as the natural product to be sold. The urban vitality and cultural depth is a rather recent phenomenon. So too is the revelation of the enormous new marketing opportunity. Still, even if the strategy and will existed earlier, it is doubtful if the festive urban activity of British Columbia could be effectively communicated or marketed as it now exists.

The problem is in the visual packaging.

Much of the best of the festive and cultural offering in British Columbia has not been designed for tourism marketability . Often, the product is a superior one, but almost without exception, it is poorly presented for marketing purposes. Superior product in inferior packaging defies a selling axiom but is the rule rather than the exception where it concerns the cultural offering in British Columbia.

Why is this so?

It is because those who organize and produce such events cater primarily to a converted, presold and predominantly local audience. Therefore, the look and feel of the event, from the outside is a low priority. In fact, it is of virtually no consequence. The producers are concerned almost exclusively with product and apply their budget against the quality of the presentation itself. Scant attention is paid to the environmental aesthetics. The result is that many "festival" type events are not very festive at all and usually they are, experienced firsthand, much more rewarding experiences than they look to be from outside the venue.

For this reason, the product often must be experienced to be fully appreciated. What is really needed is product that can excite and offer much promise from a great distance in order to motivate its being experienced. That requires an application of visual packaging for marketability.

None of this matters much to the organizers. Most events are annual. Traditions are built. There is ample local publicity. Incremental growth comes largely through word of mouth, friends, and habit. They achieve the level of local ritual. Because of this, the budget is invariably concentrated on improvement of content. It is invested in the product itself and not on the visual packaging of the product. From the point of view of the producers, this policy is quite defendable.

Marketability for Tourism is another question. The purely experiential can be amorphous and extremely difficult to convey in a magazine ad. For the festive offerings of this province to be sold abroad without being experienced, they must, above all, look and feel inviting. Festivals must be festive. Attractions must look finished. There must be critical mass. There must be a sense of compelling phenomenon.

The Expo Experience

To illustrate the meaning of "visual packaging" as it applies to the marketing of events, it might be useful to reflect on the successful marketing of Expo 86.

It has been argued by some that, considering the budget involved, and taken element by element, Expo 86 did not have as remarkable an actual product offering as the success of the event seems to indicate. What may have in fact assured the phenomenal triumph of Expo was the "visual packaging" of that product. It was the environmental envelope, the ambiance, the cadence, and the aesthetic of the entire exposition site which prevailed. That which received the highest acclaim was the packaging of the product more than it was the actual content of the package.

Indeed, early renderings of the Expo site envisioned a rather stark urban landscape. It was functional and adequate, but hardly exciting. It was a weak presentation for an undertaking that would ultimately have to be marketed so aggressively in order to succeed.

Two years before opening day, a reassessment of the site design was undertaken. The first issue addressed was definition of product. Each world exposition carries its unique environmental aesthetic. Each looks quite different from the others. Some are monumental, others jerrybuilt. Some are colourful and others muted. Some architecturally experimental and others almost conservative. Some are quite temporary in feeling and others are permanent creations.. While one must assume that the basic exercise of product definition would also have been undertaken for all previous world expositions, there is little evidence that the same conclusions were reached elsewhere as were in Vancouver.

Because Expo 86 was a temporary gathering celebrating a specific category of human achievement, the decision reached was to treat it as a celebratory festival, albeit a festival of massive proportions and at a world class level.

Thus, festivity became a primary design objective. As the designers envisioned it, the environment in which the exposition would be held should look and feel like a very special landscape which could kindle the spirit, touch the emotions, and be a catalyst for the imagination. The working vocabulary reflected the ultimate design philosophy: Spirit. Fantasy. Vibrance. Optimism. Exuberance. Euphoria. Charisma. Surprise. Joyfulness. Exhilaration. Celebration.

History now tells us that what came to be known as the "Sitescape" of Expo 86 transformed the event from merely a place to see into a place to be. More than any other single element, perhaps, it elevated the experience to the level of true phenomenon.

Beyond all this, however, it performed another, far more important function. It gift-wrapped the product and in so doing, it made Expo _marketable_

Expo was a good product in _great_ packaging.

The cost of the Sitescape program was but one or two percentage of the total Expo budget and a quite rewarding investment.

While Expo 86 is an excellent example of integration through strong environmental aesthetics, it did have the advantage of being a controlled single project on a controlled site.

However, much of the Expo design philosophy owes its inspiration to a far more remarkable design accomplishment achieved two years earlier on a far less controlled site when and _entire_ _city_ was visually packaged for the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics.

This event was to be held in a wide variety of separated facilities, much the way the various festive events of a Vancouver summer are held in a variety of neighbourhoods and venues. Los Angeles, like Vancouver, has an atypical urban form with no single core of activity.

The challenge was to give the city a cohesive visual unity, and a central identity through the means of temporary environmental design.

The designers set about to create a sense of festivity and integration to 28 renovated athletic facilities as well as 43 cultural venues, three Olympic villages and the streets and parks approaching and surrounding these areas.

In its review issue, the Design Quarterly architectural magazine reported: "The result was festive design on a grand scale and at its innovative best." It described how the designers convinced the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee that while events can transform the nature of a city, it is possible to control and order the nature of that transformation. "The transformation was not only in the temporary decoration of the sites, but also one of perception-that Los Angeles emerged as a coherent place..."

The design program established a style and spirit which created a buoyancy within the city. The urban decoration injected an exhilaration to a boycotted event widely expected to fail. It was generally conceded that the Los Angeles experience strengthened the threatened olympic movement.

What does all this have to do with Tourism in British Columbia?

An Olympic Games, held at the lowest ebb of the event in history, with half the world in boycott, is a triumph. A World Exposition, following a series of utter failures, against criticism, political bickering, a threat of cancellation, and discouraging skepticism, is a triumph.

In both cases, the program and content was much the same as the previous failed events, but here, in both cases, the exhuberance of the physical environment altered the perception and became the factor which shaped the experience. In both cases, a temperament was created which encouraged welcoming and gracious hosts, a positive and exhuberant collective mood, courtesy, optimism, and a sense of renewal. If it possible to dress for success, and success depends upon the quality of experience a guest is accorded, then surely there is a lesson to be learned from the role that the festive environmental design played in these two events.

If the perception of an event can be so strongly affected by the colour and design of its environment, then why not an entire city or province and on a permanent basis? If a clear identity is needed to set this destination apart and establish its unique image, then why not create the most festive atmosphere in the world?.

There is no reason why lamp posts must be dark green.

Constraints and Commitment

Much of the foregoing is self-evident. Tourism is a renewable and labour-intensive resource. As a potential revenue source, tourism is burgeoning at a rate unmatched by the traditional resource industries.

The greater growth and revenue potential appears to depend upon a type of tourist who has not been fully targetted. This person primarily desires a mixed experience which is largely urban and reflects the cultural differences of his destination. Somehow, this group seems largely ignorant of those product components most likely to stimulate their interest.

However much economic sense it might make, there are two basic reasons why it is difficult for any government to closely associate with the development of this opportunity.

Historically, the government of British Columbia has dealt in very serious business. It has supported the development of forestry, mining, electric power, natural gas, shipping, and fishing. These have been the domain of the powerful, the subjects of the business magazines, the currency of the stock exchange and the shoptalk of the private clubs. Such industries are comfortable areas for government involvement.

Now, the clearest revenue opportunity lies in the selling of "fun." This is a difficlt adjustment for the old ethic. As long as tourism was seen as, and restricted to, camping and fishing and upcountry outdoor activty, it was as comfortable as the other traditional resources. But the more lucrative market segment desires cultural experience, the arts, festivity, surprise and a foreign ambiance. Because these are seen by many as indulgent or trivial, and the potential for slanted media interpretation being what it is, some re-educating and re-positioning is essential.

The second difficulty, lies in the fact that so much of what the upscale tourism market seeks is concentrated in the Lower Mainland and particularly in Vancouver. To design for this opportunity while attempting to appear egalitarian is difficult. Paris is Paris and France is France and they recognize the difference. One goes to Paris, then sees France. The "gateway to the province" concept may be a more difficult sell in British Columbia.

It remains, however, that the bigger spenders are the more urban people seeking the more urban/cultural experience. They do some touring but the city is the focus of their interests.

Despite Expo 86, Vancouver for some reason remains relatively unknown among this target group. Also, without enormous effort to sustain it, the Expo momentum will quickly wane. If Vancouver is to rise above its 19th place North American tourist destination rating, it must have a more focused image. With its combination of cleanliness, safety, setting, and sheer festive exhuberance, the city is probably unique in North America. It is a joyous place to be. It exudes fun.

This unique combination of festive fun in an idyllic city is clearly the "hook" needed to draw the target market to Vancouver. To sell this product, it must be approached like any other marketed commodity competing for consumer dollars. It must be packaged for the shelf. It must be given the high-impact giftwrapping to achieve consumer top-of-mind The challenge is to give it the clearly identifiable "look" of the most festive and exhilarating city in North America. If every image of Vancouver is alive with colour and life, it will come as quickly to the mind of the American urban tourist as does a New Orleans or a San Francisco.

This will not happen by accident. Without leadership and some co-ordinating instrument of implementation, individual initiatives may continue but the compelling overlay of magic will not happen.

Certainly, the talent and expertise are available. With the experience of Expo behind them, there are few better conceptual design teams anywhere than those which could be locally mobilized for this task.

The key to the realization of this potential likely lies in a basic shift in attitude towards what is called "culture" in British Columbia. Perhaps the word has an elitist ring. But the culture that would realize this opportunity is really the broad spectrum of creativity and energy which feeds the sustained sense of ongoing celebration and festivity. It is the uniquely high levels of joyous human activity, and the exhilarating cosmopolitan experience. It is culture in a new sense of the word. It is not some terribly arty notion. It is everything that we have come to think of as "our culture."

Because this is the key component of the key market opportunity in this province, it should be treated as such. This means that all preconceptions about culture and festivity being social luxuries with little bearing on the general economy should be put aside. However difficult the attitudinal shift, it is the culture and festivity of our cities which will entice the primary growth segment of the primary growth industry. These activities should be taken seriously because supported and properly marketed, they will generate significant revenues.

The leadership and support must come from government. To ignore the opportunity on the basis that these are mere indulgent diversions, or private ventures of little consequence would suggest that the clear signals being sent by the marketing research and consulting specialists are not being heeded. Failure of the government to get directly involved will also likely result in the failure of a clear and effective market-driven consumer perception to ever materialize.

Conversely, commitment to pursue the opportunity to its fullest will open a wide variety of potential approaches.

What is needed is an "instrument of implementation" to develop and support existing "phenomena" and a gradual, long-term development of the other opportunities, as well as a Marketing Strategy which will convey an image and awareness of the product.

It is recommended that the Ministry take the lead in creating an event enhancement capability. A workable structure could be a task force combining private sector consultant resources with bodies of authority from both the Ministry and the city. Working together they would undertake the following basic objectives:

(1) To facilitate the enhancement of events, attractions, and urban festive aesthetics with specific reference to tourism marketing objectives through a co-ordinating mechanism established by the Ministry in order to deal with all requests and enquiries concerning activities of the nature described in the Review.

(2) To encourage the application of government funding to this objective when it does not otherwise lessen the quality of the basic product and to establish a special funding program which would provide asssistance for consultation on planning and production of visual and environmental enhancement.

(3) To, through the Development Division of the Ministry, determine development opportunities for municipal and/or corporate visibility in such projects and to stimulate interest in providing expertise or financial assistance.

(4) To continue research and concept refinement in order to identify those activities which the Ministry feels will have the greatest potential for successful achievement.

(5) To initiate a pilot project with a selected number of festivals, events, and attractions and target a specifically identified promotional market.

(6) To refer the project to individual Regional Economic zones for consideration by the Minister of State and his advisory committees.

The Existing Product.

The opportunity to enhance this prime resource for marketability is particularly attractive because so much of the raw material is of so high a quality.

To evaluate the opportunities, it would perhaps be useful to re-categorize the product.

As established in the "Marketing Context" section, this review seeks to identify those components of the tourism resource which best exemplify the marketable spirit, festivity and energy of British Columbia. It covers a broad spectrum of differing activities and for this purpose, it is not useful to group them by type of activity (festivals, attractions, cultural events, recreation, heritage sites, etc) as is now done within the Ministry. Instead, for the purposes of this review, it is far more appropriate and useful to categorize by level of potential.

The first such category includes those events which might be called "Phenomena." These are festivals, events and attractions which, not only meet the basic criteria, but also deliver an experience which somehow epitomizes the unique quality of British Columbia.

The second category includes the "Potentials," those events which are conceptually promising but somehow need organizational or creative improvement.

The third category is the collective remainder, the various "Generics" which combine to provide the overall high level of regional festivity but likely lack the potential to effectively enhance the marketing objectives on an individual basis.

The fourth category is the realm of "Possibility". New events, festivals and concepts which do not presently exist but which present clear development opportunities for the future.

The Phenomena

To evaluate events, the conventional criteria such as artistic quality, critical acclaim, financial stability, organizational competence, promotional skills, fund-raising abilities, community involvement and so on may not be so important from the point of view of tourism marketing. The most efficiently conceived and managed event may still lack the unique ingredient which raises it to the level of phenomenon.

The phenomenon has some element or quality about it which clearly sets it apart. It may be the distinctiveness of the concept, or the tradition built through longevity, or the sheer critical mass, or the utter outrageousness of the event. Each phenomenon has about it a unique "handle" which lifts it above the commonplace.

The following, in no particular order, lists examples of such phenomena and the reasons why they might be so designated.

1. The Vancouver Children's Festival

because it is probably the best produced such event in North America, and has a unique and highly packagable combination of concept and venue.

The City of Vancouver takes great and justifiable pride in this annual festival. Vancouver Mayor Gordon Campbell's proclamation of Children's Week which is built around the festival, uses phrases like "the foremost international event of its kind in the world" and "now emulated in more than a dozen cities in North America."

This is a highly respected event and a world class act. Its genesis is fairly well known. The 1976 Habitat Festival produced a sizeable surplus. The following year, Habitat Co-ordinator Ernie Fladell was asked to create summer festival activity with the surplus funds. Given this opportunity, Fladell applied his enthusiasm and experience to create both the Folk Music Festival and The Children's Festival. In so doing, he introduced the festival phenomenon that would become so important an factor in the British Columbian tourism product. It is worth noting that in 1977 and 1978, Grace McCarthy, who was then the Provincial Secretary and Minister of Tourism, gave Fladell great encouragement as she was seeking a heightened level of urban festive activity to counter the province's fishing and hunting tourism image.

The Children's Festival and the Folk Music Festival were launched in the same year, were somewhat alike in their presentation style and quality, were innovative and spirited, were held outdoors in the city parks, and under the same brightly coloured striped tents. The programming and operations of both events have been refined over the years to establish pre-eminence within their genre.

Upon discovering these festivals, a first-time visitor might express some surprise at the remarkably high level of both programming and operational excellence. These events have a loyal following and the positive word-of-mouth effectively builds on that base so there is little need to develop elaborate site decor. So, events are both far better than they look to be from the outside. And that, from the point of view of tourism marketing, is a problem. These festivals need an overlay of visual packaging if they are to be effective tools in communicating the sense of festivity in British Columbia.

2. The Vancouver Folk Music Festival

because it too is one of the finest of its kind, has an essential integrity of production and an environmental aesthetic which can be easily enhanced.

This event reversed the setback of Expo year and played to a capacity audience for its tenth anniversary. As festival co-ordinator Gary Cristall points out, it cannot get any bigger, so the objective is to make it better.

The art of getting better is clearly evident at this event. Every facet of the festival is meticulously analysed in a series of review sessions. During the event, audience, performers, and staff are interviewed for preferences, beefs, and suggestions.

The result of this commitment to improvement is a constant fine-tuning of every aspect of the basic product. Clearly evident is the kind and thoughtful approach to the treatment of people, particularly the handicapped and the young. It is a remarkably peaceful and civilized event. For as many as 10,000 people to generate such a level of joy and exhuberance in such an orderly and civilized way is quite rare.

There is no rowdiness. The audience is responsive but also repectful of the performers. No one bullies for a better place to sit. The queues for food, water, telephones, and toilets are all self-policing and without a hint of line jumping. Most remarkable is the fact that at any time during the three days, not a scrap of litter can be found on the site. The audience at the folk festival has quite simply developed the habit of picking up after itself. In fact,it would be difficult to find a trace of anti-social behaviour at this festival.

Cristall says they attempt to run the festival as a peaceful society might be run and offer it as a model of how human beings should be treated. This philosophy of social consciousness extends to so many areas. There are raised platforms for people in wheelchairs. Special interpretation for the visual and hearing impaired. Cooling showers to ease the heat. Locking racks for bicycles. Parking controls to keep resident spaces free. Stage layout which baffles and directs the sound away from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

One guiding policy of this festival is accessibility. The organizers donate many thousands of tickets to the disadvantaged people who could not otherwise experience folk music. In fact, it is because of insistence on this accessibility, that people be able to reach the site on foot, by bicycle, and by public transit, that there has been resistance against moving the event out of the city.

The integrity of the programming policy is worth noting. This festival does not rely on the safety of established entertainers but rather has built a reputation for providing exposure for the remarkable talents which are not locally known. Specifically, the policy provides that 60 percent of the artists cannot have appeared in previous years. Cristall describes this event as a "festival of introduction" and there is a commitment each year to launch at least a half dozen truly major new folk talents to this area.

While this is essentially a music festival, it is also openly conceded that there is a political component which leans leftward. Folk music has traditionally been a medium of expression for the poor, the oppressed, the labour movement, the feminist movement, the minorities, the young, and a fair number of extreme radicals. Folk music sings the blues and it would therefore be difficult to imagine an establishment folk festival. For this reason, an event such as this one, which in part celebrates the right of the ordinary people to protest is less a threat to the system than an affirmation of it.

Whatever its leaning, however, this festival is one of the last free enterprise success stories of its type with less than $65,000 of its funding coming from sponsorship and grants. With product proven and box office solid, the "luxuries" of additional funding would be directed to improving the quality of programming and improving the environmental aesthetics. There has been an aggressive marketing effort in recent years which will now be extended to Northern California and the Bay area where there is a strong folk music following.

It is arguable that the Vancouver Folk Festival is among the best, if not itself the best such festival on the continent. The multi-stage "workshop" concept is unique to Canada and along with the Edmonton, Winnipeg and Mariposa folk music festivals this event certainly qualifies as a presentation of true world class standard.

As mentioned earlier, its program is also much stronger than its site look. Cristall agrees that except for the magnificent beachfront setting, the aesthetics of the festival's paraphenalia are wanting. This event is a well-run, classy product in rather lacklustre packaging. It is an excellent example of an opportunity for investment in visual treatment for marketability.

3. The Chemainus Festival of Murals

because the impetus behind its creation is a strongly compelling and uniquely marketable story.

Chemainus bills itself as "The Little Town That Could." A mill town, the victim of cruel economic fate, resurrects itself as a tourism phenomenon. Chemainus is the Phoenix, the Cinderella, and the Horatio Alger of British Columbian communities and it is a story the tourists love.

The transformation of Chemainus is far from complete and it still tends to be more of a grey stucco mill town than it is a themed attraction. Yet the tourism popularity is undeniable. The Chemainus story carries the potential of worldwide awareness. Because of this, Chemainus will inevitably be the prime attraction of the Victoria to Nanaimo corridor.

The recently completed Cowichan/Chemainus Valleys Tourism Development Strategy proposes the unique concept of a Living Forestry Project. This is seen as an Ecomuseum celebrating the province's traditional prime resource, forestry. The concept encompasses the West Coast Trail, the Cowichan River Footpath, The British Columbia Forest Museum, the MacMillan Bloedel Sawmill, the MacMillan Bloedel Forestry Operations, the Ladysmith Railway Museum and Interpretive Centre, the Crown Forest Arboretum, the Canadian International Paper operations, Doman Industries, individual skills of the experienced people of the area, and the town of Chemainus with its Festival of Murals.

Other nearby attractions such as the Duncan totems, the Ladysmith heritage areas, the British Columbia Forest Museum, and the planned Native Indian Heritage Centre at Cowichan enhance the Chemainus experience but the unique concept of the murals will likely remain the headliner which motivates the trip through the island corridor.

The PMD Chemainus Tourism Study concluded that there is high awareness of the murals and that marketing efforts should continue. The marketing of accommodation needs bolstering because 94% of the visitors are not staying overnight. Also, other forms of activity are needed. The waterfront area provides the most promising development opportunity. Tourism on bicycles (10,000 visitors per year) is a growing market for Chemainus. Finally, the study concluded That more attention should be paid to the demographic profile of the visitor.

The underlying message of this study is that enormous numbers of tourists are popping into Chemainus for a few hours, seeing some of the murals, (only a third venture beyond the downtown core) and then leave without spending very much money. Only 1 in 200 visitors buys accommodation. For many, Chemainus is an absolutely free attraction.

The immediate goals and objectives seek to address this problem. Street musicians, ethnic festivals, a naval visit, and a theatrical presentation of stories from the murals are planned to be added to the mix for the upcoming summer season. More murals will be commissioned.

The longer term objectives will encourage governments and others to include Chemainus in their advertising. Also, there will be ongoing efforts to heighten the perception of Chemainus as a fine arts centre. The town will continue to upgrade the visual appearance of its buildings and the surrounding signage. An attempt will be made to extend the season.

What is most remarkable about the Chemainus phenomenon is the fact that it has achieved such success while still being so incomplete. It is almost as though rave reviews were being given to an unfinished painting or an unfinished novel had already become a best seller. The town lacks integration and much of is still drab and uninviting. There are very few elements designed to draw the visitor from one pocket of interest to another. Most of the visitation time is concentrated in the fully themed section of town. Most visitors remain unaware that there is a delightful area developing down by the waterfront.

There are opportunities to efficiently accelerate the infilling of colour and festivity that would coordinate this project and give it the critical mass to become more than an hour's diversion. If a project ever deserved development support to realize its already proven potential, Chemainus must be that project.

4. The Town of Barkerville

because the sense of authenticity and purity of the restoration combined with the sheer size of the site and the romance of the Cariboo goldrush provide a ghost town experience unmatched anywhere in North America.

There are literally hundreds of "ghost town" attractions strewn across western North America. They range from the purist's preservation such as Bodie, now a California State Park where the town has been frozen in time, the decay arrested, but no embellishment introduced, to Tombstone, Arizona, a movie-set theme park which acts as a backdrop to Wyatt Earp's on-the-hour shootout at the O.K. Corral.

Barkerville is a sympathetic compromise of restoration and replication that satisfies both purist and tourist. While the town had lost its goldrush vigour by the early 1870s, it remained sparsely populated and thus reasonably protected. In 1959, Barkerville was designated a Provincial

Historic Park but the funding was limited and the process of restoration was very slow. Only 15 of Barkerville's 120 original buildings were deemed suitable for restoration. The rest was to be replica infill to simulate the physical look of the town between 1869 and 1885.

It was not until 1980 that a 5 million dollar Restoration Fund was established and an effective masterplan introduced to accellerate and complete the project. This second phase responded to the expectations of contemoporary audiences by stressing interpretation, programming and a high degree of visitor participation.

The resulting heritage attraction is quite special. It is probably the best all-around "ghost town" attraction in North America. This is the result of a combination of factors. There are sufficient key landmark structures to establish essential credibility. The considerable infill of replica buildings has been executed with diligent respect for historical authenticity and provides the critical mass to make Barkerville a worthwhile long-distance destination. The propping and detailing of period furnishings and atmosphere and the entertainment program enrich the experience. And finally, the physical isolation of the townsite, the pedestrian-only access restriction, and the absence of an immediately adjacent commercial centre preserve the purity of the experience. No other pioneer restoration in North America can quite claim this appealing combination of qualities.

5. Fort Steele

because much of it is real and because it is the only sizeable and authentic heritage attraction in the eastern half of the province.

Fort Steele differs from Barkerville in several ways. Firstly, it is not only a restoration or a replication. Fort Steele Historic Park is a created example of a typical Kootenay District town for the period of 1890 to 1905. The nucleus of the project, however, is 20 original buildings which remained in the Fort Steele townsite when Fort Steele was declared an historic park in 1961. Another 20 buildings have been constructed or moved to the site and restoration continues.

Fort Steele does not have the same sense of isolation and romance that is felt at Barkerville. In fact, with its mixture of elements including a stockade wall and gate and a

British steam train ride, there is almost the suggestion of a theme park quality.

But the physical setting on the benchland above the Kootenay River and with the backrop of the Rocky Mountains is an exhilarating aesthetic. The considerable amount of debris in the open spaces and the fully stocked displays in the buildings create a real sense of discovery. The museum is fascinating, the programming is entertaining, the interpretation and "living history" program is excellent, and there is plenty of opportunity for visitor involvement.

Fort Steele's appeal is further strengthened because, for those who enjoy heritage attractions, there is so little else of significance in the area that it is a welcome cultural oasis.

6. The Abbotsford Air Show

because it has, over 26 years, become a summertime ritual and because it has been named the best airshow in the world.

The Abbotsford International Air Show is a mega-production and that it has grown from a small airshow staged by 40 people in 1961 to its present level of sophisticated spectacle on pure volunteer effort is almost beyond belief.

This event is surely the entertainment bargain of the year. The show is so overwhelming and so expensive that it simply could not be afforded if it was not a donated gesture from many sources. There are billions of dollars worth of aircraft on the field and performing overhead. They perform courtesy of the United States and Canadian air forces as well as the periodic participation of the air forces of Great Britain, Italy, France, Brazil, and even the Soviet Union. Then there are hundreds more owners of vintage, experimental, and special interest aircraft who donate their presence and performance. In fact, with the exception of 3 paid employees, the many thousands of manhours needed to stage this complex extravaganza come entirely as donated time.

The one byproduct of the airshow's popularity that always flawed the experience was the horrendous traffic jams which formed on the routes to the field. In 1987, this problem was greatly alleviated through the Shell Vantage Route concept offering trouble free access to the site and free parking for those who bought advance tickets. The system worked and in so doing, also lightened the congestion for those who did not have the special tickets.

Ranking Abbotsford above the airshows at Paris and Farnborough, England, the International Council of Airshows (ICAS) voted the 1986 Silver Anniversary Abbotsford Airshow "the best airshow in the world."

7. The Nanaimo Bathtub Race

because it is an original concept and because it has grown from zany publicity stunt to a bona fide sporting event capable of bringing international television coverage to British Columbia at the height of the festive season.

The Nanaimo Bathtub race is an archtypical westcoast invention, the kind of concept which sustains Central Canada's mythologies regarding the eccentricities of Lotusland.

The race was originally conceived as a one-time event for Nanaimo's 1967 Centennial Celebrations and used actual iron bathtubs. Centennial Committee Chairman Frank Ney recognized the potential of the idea and the committee became The Loyal Nanaimo Bathtub Society with the aim of creating an annual event. The celebration has been broadened to include an array of supporting events such as the Miss

Nanaimo Beauty Pageant, the crowning of King Neptune and the Mermaid Queen, the Parade of Tubs, the Mayor's tub race, plus dances, fireworks and so on, but it is the Bathtub Race which is the phenomenon.

Evidence of the wide appeal of this nonsensical idea has come in many forms. "The Bathtub Capitol of the World" quickly replaced "The Hub City" as the popular nickname for Nanaimo. The idea was emulated world wide and within a few years, there were races being held in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, England, Hawaii, and Sweden. The event became a favourite of international film makers and one year drew a crew from Walt Disney Studios.

8. The White Rock Sandcastle Competition

because it has an inexplicable chemistry capable of outdrawing a papal visit.

When the weather is right, White Rock hosts the most popular single day event in the province. It is somewhat participatory, appeals to all age groups, and alludes to being a quasi-artistic activity.

White Rock experimented with a variety of festive and cultural event concepts before settling on the Sandcastle Competition in 1979. As it happens, White Rock is blessed with a unique moisture-bearing sand that retains a sculpted form and veteran castle builders consider it to be among the best found anywhere.

In eight years, this event has gathered a remarkable following. The attendence announced in the press for the 1987 competition was 200,000 to watch 1350 sand sculptors. Even the Prime Minister of Canada and his family attended, arriving by hovercraft.

On one hand, this spectacle conveys much imagery that would be beneficial to the perception of British Columbia. There is sunshine and beach, the oceanside town, children wading in warm, shallow water under blue skies, a closed pedestrian mall, tanned bodies everywhere, many of them expressing their artistic talents through truly remarkable sand sculpture. These are strong and desirable disclaimers to the British Columbian rain-belt image.

But there is also some ugliness. Some might see an overcrowded Coney Island midway sleaziness and an unsettling presence of too many punks and bikers. Too many tattoos. The potential for violence is evident and poses the greatest threat to the longterm success and value of the event. It is the priority issue to be addressed if the event is to survive.

Because there are these elements of both positive and negative imagery, the environment needs a visual softening. The Sandcastle competition is the perfect example of an event which is very popular, quite rewarding and fun to attend but almost impossible to pictorially convey in a positive manner. The building of sandcastles is a rather innocent and pleasant pursuit but the visual impression is inevitably that of uncontrollable milling hordes and hopeless traffic gridlock. It is an event which could help to counter perceptions about cold climate and isolation but would be infinitely more effective at doing so if it could be given a more positive and festive look and feel.

9. The Royal Hudson

because it is the most spectacular urban-departure day trip on the continent. Where else could a train enter a tunnel in suburbia and emerge on the shoreline of a fjord?

This attraction, properly enhanced, could be one of the most effective tools in demonstrating the unique mix of the urban/wilderness experience, but it does not seem to get the exposure it deserves.

Certainly, it appears that the Royal Hudson, since its first year of operation in 1973, has had a built-in deficit and may never pay for itself. It came very close to being cancelled entirely in 1982. In 1985, the Royal Hudson Steam Train Society was created to privatize the operation and allow the solicitation of tax-deductable corporate donations. Other options such as charter runs, ski train extensions to Whistler, and the addition of a gambling car have been considered. Still, with recent near-capacity bookings, raised ticket prices, and a more cost-efficient organization, the deficit is beginning to be cut.

That aside, the Royal Hudson experience is one of British Columbia's showcase phenomena. The needs upscaling from the brown bag image, and it needs some truly innovative programming.

The recent designation of the Britannia Mine complex as a National Historic Site will eventually provide a credible and major destination attraction and should greatly enhance this high potential tourism offering.

10. The Gastown Grand Prix Bicycle Race

because the spectacle of world class athletes competing over cobblestone streets in the tight confines of the historic area of a major city is romantic, heroic, unique and a singularly "continental" experience for North America.

Since this race was inaugurated 15 years ago, it has grown to become what the cycling fraternity refer to as a classic. A classic cycle race attracts quality competitors. Some of the very best in the world including team riders from the Tour de France compete in Gastown.

It is neither Gastown or the bicycle race but rather the combination of the two which create the very special quality of this event. This event is another which, given a modest amount of festive enhancement, would create an excellent cosmopolitan and "foreign" image of Vancouver as urban cultural experience.

11. North Coast Indian Culture

because British Columbia's native culture is the most purely indigenous tourist "discovery" that this province has to offer. It epitomizes the concept of Cultural Tourism.

It is possible to achieve this cultural experience in a variety of ways. The UBC Museum of Anthropology and the Royal British Columbia Museum are the simplest and most convenient ways for the urban visitor to discover the indigenous culture. Architecturally, and in terms of exhibit quality, a visit to the MOA is a remarkable experience. This is one of the world's great museums and is certainly a prime Vancouver attraction.

There are the two Kwakiutl museums at Alert Bay and Cape Mudge which were built to house the potlatch collections returned from confiscation by the National Museum in the late 1970s. Like the Erickson design for the MOA, these Henry Hawthorne designed structures are based on the longhouse concept and are quite handsome. The Alert Bay museum and its associated woodcarving activities attracts considerable cruise ship visitation. The museum, in fact, serves as the hub of an excellent cultural touring area.

With the creation of the South Moresby National Park following the designation of Ninstints Village on Anthony Island as a World Heritage Site, the Haida people are currently building lodges near the main points of interest, the 6 or 7 sites of ancient villages. While there is no actual Haida Museum, there are museums at Skidegate, Port Clements and Masset with fairly good Haida collections. The Nootkas are planning a museum in the Long Beach area but this project has been stalled by the Meares Island claim activities.

Another major attraction is the K'san replica Tsimshian Indian village which has stood near Hazleton west of Prince George since 1968. Some feel that the activity level, maintenance, and programming of K'san are lacking but the potential for activating and packaging this attraction is good.

12. The World Cup Downhill Race

because it is the only regularly scheduled British Columbia sporting event which draws every one of the world's elite competitors.

The Men's Downhill is the glamour discipline of world class competitive skiing. This is more so in Canada thanks to the excitement provided a few years back by "The Crazy Canucks" and locally by Dave Murray of Whistler. In Europe, the World Cup circuit is the focus of sporting attention in season and the racers are national heroes.

Such a competition, where the very best in the world meet in a series of international venues, is analagous to Formula One Grand Prix auto races and the events of the professional tennis Gran Slam circuit.

A downhill race at this level is a unique spectacle. A typical downhill course is two to three miles long with a vertical drop of 2000 to 3000 feet. The racers reach speeds of 90 miles per hour. To witness such speed at close range, where a human body at such great velocity creates an eerie whistling effect, is an unforgettable memory.

Less regularly, a World Cup Giant Slalom race is awarded to British Columbia. This year, both Downhill and Giant Slalom were awarded to British Columbia. The latter involves 80 of the world's finest giant slalom specialists from 20 different countries. This race was scheduled to be held held one week before the World Cup Downhill at Whistler and in both cases, the competitors arrived directly from the

Olympic Winter Games. It is the first time that two such elite races have been scheduled in the province in a single year.

*Note: Weather conditions forced cancellation of both events after completion of training runs. Because such difficulties have been experienced for the majority of the major race venues worldwide this season, the local difficulties are not seen as an impediment to hosting future world class events.

Because a World Cup Downhill Race or a World Cup Slalom Race is a glamourous top-ranked international event, and as such receives worldwide television coverage, it is an opportunity to expose British Columbia, Vancouver and Whistler to exactly the upscale audience which comprises the desirable tourism target market. Presently, this opportunity is not being fully exploited.

13. Whistler Townsite

because it is a created environmental phenomenon. It is a fantasy village in a spectacular natural setting. It has an architectural theming and exhuberant ambiance that is unlike any other municipality in Canada. It is also a unique event venue.

For the architects and urban planners involved, the prospect of creating a small, self-contained ski village from scratch presented a rare opportunity. The Whistler project was driven by a group of individuals who brought to it levels of vision and determination as well as financial and political power that few such undertakings enjoy. In 1975, Whistler became the first and only resort municipality in British Columbia.

What sets Whistler apart is that it combines many of the qualities of a traditional European ski village while retaining a distictly west coast architectural style. The heart of the town is vehicle-free and the pedestrian ways twist through covered walkways intersected by narrow alleys. The village storefronts are recessed under snug overhangs to provide a sense of security amid a huge and intimidating natural environment. But the themed "Swiss Chalet" motif has been rejected in favour of a pure westcoast contemporary approach. In the context of a resort society it has been possible to create a mixed-use commercial/residential ambiance that is not yet accepted as workable by most urban planning departments and zoning boards.

Still, the Whistler townsite lacks festivity. At times, it seems strangely bleak. As a pure resort environment, it needs an envelope of colourful and celebratory streetscape aesthetics to convey the special nature of the community and the exciting experience it promises. It needs packaging.

14. The Carol Ships

because they are a unique expression of the Christmas season in a unique climate.

Like the Nanaimo Bathtub Race, the Carol Ship idea is a Vancouver original. This concept has been copied in areas as separated as Portland, Oregon and London, England, but it has not quite been duplicated. Like the other purely British Columbian rituals, the Carol Ships have longevity. The concept was born in 27 years ago when the promotion manager of the Bayshore Inn had the idea of an illuminated boat with a few carolers which would sail back and forth in front of the hotel for the entertainment of the guests. Since 1960, the flotilla has grown from a single boat to a parade of between 50 and 70 each Christmas.

15. Granville Island and the Comedy Festival.

Because of all the experiments with public spaces, this is the one which works best and because of the synergy that is created when the right entertainment plays in the right environment.

Granville Island has been described as "the moment in architecture," a sudden combination of elements that nobody could anticipate or create, but which occurs at exactly the right time.

This project weathered strong opposition and criticism from those concerned about economic effects on the other commercial areas. Others felt that the planning concept was inappropriate for the surrounding False Creek development. And many simply did not grasp the vision.

But Granville Island has worked exceptionally well. It is a unique, physically isolated 38 acres located only five minutes from the heart of the city, with the inherent character of timeworn industrial buildings, and the ideal location on an active waterway. This curious mixture of cultural, recreational, educational, commercial and industrial activity has inspired similar approaches to similar areas in other cities. The island is energetic yet peaceful, cosy but not cramped, the open areas functional and street-oriented, and the entire environment designed to be negotiated on foot. Above all, it was the decision to recycle the existing but aging industrial architecture and retain the unusual street layout (designed for rail cars which cannot negotiate right angles) which resulted in the gives the island its thoroughly comfortable ambiance.

In August of this year, the Vancouver International Comedy Festival was introduced to the island. This event brought street entertainers, comedians, storytellers, and stage presentations to seven island venues. There were 300 performances over a ten day period.

The festival was well sponsored. The Central Housing and Mortgage Corporation, The British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Recreation, and Culture, the federal Department of Communications, Petro Canada, the island tenants, and the City of Vancouver all provided funding support towards the $153,000 budget. The project also received $45,000 in job creation money and $53,000 of in-kind donations..

The festival worked best as an street event, drawing large audiences and perceptibly enhancing the personality of island. The indoor theatre presentations were less well attended but still considered successful for a first year effort.

There was some initial opposition to the festival, particularly from some island tenants who feared the added congestion and felt that the event should have been held in the shoulder seasons when the area needed traffic builders.

In the end, the festival proved itself an unqualified success. The reviews were glowing. Island management was delighted. The public loved it. And most of the detractors were won over. One major sponsor has committed to a 500% funding increase.

A survey of Granville Island visitors and Comedy Festival attendees was taken during the event by Coriolis Consulting Corporation. Over half of the attendees came from outside Vancouver and one third from outside the Lower Mainland. Over 98% of Granville Island visitors thought the island an appropriate place for such special events. Among the observations included in the summary were the following:

(1) (The implication that) "...a festival will probably be more successful in attracting people if it is held in a location that is an attraction in its own right."

(2) (The suggestion that) "...Granville Island visitor volumes were higher because of the Comedy Festival and that the Festival had higher attendance because it was held on

Granville Island."

(3) "The main contribution of the Comedy Festival may have been the indirect benefit of adding to the pool of activities and events that make Vancouver interesting, rather than the direct benefit of drawing people from outside the city."

Again,while individual cultural events do not in themselves neccesarily provide a motivation to visit, they collectively create the desired urban/cultural perception.

The Comedy Festival will be back at Granville Island next year.

The Potentials

There are many other festivals, events and attractions which, while not having that unique phenomenon quality, do have great potential to help modify the existing perception of British Columbia. The potential of these events may have been only partially realized, may not have yet been fully tested, may not have yet achieved critical mass, may be flawed in some other way, or may not be unique to British Columbia. Here are some examples:

16. The Vancouver Aquarium

because it is an established crowd pleaser, visitor-friendly, Vancouver's most popular tourist attraction, and while not the only or the largest of aquaria, unique in setting and presentation

17. The Asia-Pacific Festival

because it embodies a strong concept which is geographically appropriate and whose time has come. This concept deserves a restart.

18. The Chinese New Years Festival and Chinatown Itself

because Vancouver's Chinatown, with the addition of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Garden is one of the largest, most energetic such areas in North America.

19. The Williams Lake Stampede

because it has 61 years of longevity and because Williams Lake is a true cowtown which still retains some of the Cariboo-Chilcotin magic.

20. The Royal Victoria Boat Race

because it is an elite-class event in a unique setting. It is capable of drawing crews from Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and Harvard and clearly enhances the desired image for the city.

21. The Victoria Wooden Boat Festival

because it is an event concept that is as traditional and quaint as its venue and thus it too enhances the desired image for Victoria..

22. The Forestry Museum

because it is the only major tourist presentation of British Columbia's traditional major resource industry and it is a key element in the development of the Island Corridor.

23. Swiftsure Week

because it temporarily creates exhilarating aesthetics and an energetic change of character to an otherwise placid harbour and city core.

24. Grouse Mountain

because it delivers an urban visa that cannot be duplicated anywhere on earth. Only Victoria Peak in Hong

Kong and the Sugar Loaf in Rio de Janeiro offer similar experiences. In ski season, Grouse Mountain is absolutely unique.

25. The Suspension Bridges

because the bridges over both Lynn and Capilano canyons are enormously popular attractions and rare to be found within a city.

26. The Pacific National Exhibition

because while it it needs vision, focus and a clearer definition of product it is still one of the few remaining major urban agricultural exhibitions.

27. Bite of Vancouver

because it is a proven concept and a very popular one elsewhere and is of interest to the target market but needs improved venue and presentation.

28. Okanagan Wine Festival

because it offers the opportunity to enhance and upgrade the perception of an important tourism region.

29. The Fool's Festival

because this annual child-oriented April 1st parade and celebration in False Creek and Granville island is innocent, colourful, and lighthearted and injects a unusual brand of fun into the city scene.

30. Carnival

because it is a strong and barely developed festive multi-cultural concept. This event, first held in the summer after Expo, attempted to revive the concept of a multi-cultural celebration through the presentation of 13 ethnic music and cuisine "pavilions" at various Vancouver community centres. It was not well publicized or attended but was nevertheless a good concept for development.

31. The Triathalons

because they are events which draw world-class athletes and project a desirable clean and healthy image, are of interest to the more active upscale target market, and have much room for development. In addition to the Vancouver, Penticton, Vernon, and Kelowna triathalons, there is the Ironman Canada event in Penticton in which each competitor swims, bicycles, and runs 141 miles, and The Okanagan Express Relay over 302 miles from Vancouver to Summerland.

32. First Night

because it fills a need and adds an element of civility to the important New Year's Eve Celebration. It is based on a successful tradition in Boston (where 600,000 attend) which provides at the city core, an evening of entertainment and celebration which is family-oriented and alcohol-free. It is also a place to go for all those who have nowhere to go. The success of this concept has spread to 15 US cities and has proven a positive addition to the Vancouver image.

33. The Vancouver Fringe Festival

because this annual festival of alternative theatre provides opportunity for over 100 performance groups which do not enjoy mainstream exposure. Also because it shifts the activity of the arts temporarily into the Mt. Pleasant area around Main Street and Broadway, and adds vitality to that neighbourhood. The festival is entering its 4th year and growing stronger.

34. The Ethnic Festivals.

because they are exhuberant and natural and accent the cosmopolitan character of the city. Most ethnic communities of any size hold a community celebration. Typical is the

Japanese community's Powell Street Festival in August. Each such event reflects community involvement in an appropriate neighbourhood venue. These are not slickly produced events. They reflect historic roots, are annual reunions, and in a sense are an invitation for the outsider to join in and enjoy a family affair. They add soul to the city.

34. The Urbanarium Festival

because it explores and explains the urban environment, is particularly relevant to a unique city like Vancouver, is a solid and timely concept, and is the prototype of its kind. The theme, "Celebration of the City," acknowledges the city's achievements and its losses, past proposals never fulfilled, examines contemporary concerns and presents possibilities for the future. The long term objective is to create a permanent facility.

35. Science World

because science and technology centres have brought a new dynamic to the museum concept and this one promises to be one of the best. It is well funded, has solid political backing, an enthusiastic support network and an experienced and competent staff, and enjoys the advantage of a location which is a high profile architectural landmark of a World Exposition.

The Generics

The above list is of course, arguable. It is difficult to establish a cut-off point because many of the generic events, which number in the thousands, are quality presentations and likely of some measurable interest to some of the tourism market.

For the most part, these generic events fall into the broad categories of annual regional celebrations, minor and low-profile "festivals" held in interior or non-festive venues, amateur sporting events, arts and crafts fairs, most heritage attractions, trade shows and theme parks, and most ethnic or community days.

Again, the multiplicity of this activity contributes towards the perception of British Columbia as an active and creative society and helps somewhat in the achieving the objective of altering the wilderness image. Generally, however, the "generic" experience, even when excellently produced, duplicates that which the target market can find much closer to home.

The Possibilities

The following observations are apart from the immediate recommendations of this review. However, one mandate of the project is to create a "menu of opportunity" for possible future developments. Like so many unrealized concepts, many of those which follow are certainly longshots and presented purely in the spirit of "What if?" They pose possibilities of events and attractions which are now only partly realized or do not presently exist at all. Some are more practical and likely than others. Some are virtually impossible to realize but still intriguing to contemplate. Because the realm of possibility is infinite, this list is of course incomplete. It does, however, present some of the more evident opportunities.

1.The Expo 86 Site.

There is presently a world-wide search underway for a private developer of the Expo 86 site. The deadline for submissions is past and the successful candidate will be announced soon. It is therefore likely that government will exercise only limited input to the planning process. Still, it must be conceded that this site is more than just another piece of real estate.

The most valuable legacy of Expo 86 was that it began to alter the global perception of British Columbia to precisely the ends being urged in this review. With tourism becoming so important to the provincial economy, it was important that the momentum begun not be allowed to wane.

1986 proved that Vancouver, given a focussed centre of entertainment, can provide a spirited urban ambiance capable of augmenting the existing Supernatural product. Together, city and wilderness provide the province a complete, mixed tourism offering.

Curiously, for a destination which is strongly tourism-oriented, Vancouver lacks a defined after-dusk heart. There is no Shinjuku or Fisherman's Wharf or King's Cross or Left Bank or Tivoli Gardens. After dinner, there is no distinct entertainment center to which tourists are drawn.

If Vancouver was ever to have an entertainment complex, never had there been a more complete or ideally- situated infrastructure in place to achieve such a goal than at the close of Expo 86. In addition to the site itself and the elements in place, the pool of expertise was considerable and available.

The opportunity seemed at hand. The location, the facitilies, the planning talent, the public support, the optimism, and the general sense of celebration suggested that the momentum could and should have continued. Instead, much of the spirit and most of the physical complex has been lost. In the face of economic reality and the pressures to act, the outcome is not surprising.

However expedient the disposal process, it can still be hoped that some of the exhilaration of British Columbia's recent self-discovery can be rekindled in some way at False Creek. Optimistically perhaps, it might be assumed that the growing importance of tourism will merit some consideration in the decisions taken.

If it is to be a complete and major destination for the upscale tourist, Vancouver needs an entertainment-intensive environment that is a first class offering. The theming could be regional, a reflection of the province itself, and the atmosphere contemporary and enjoyable, but also challenging and renewable. As with Expo, the fun and festivity would be augmented by credible cultural and technological opportunities of discovery. In creating such a stimulating experience, the effect could be to position the province as far more than a mere vacation spot but also as a cultural and educational showcase for the leading edge of the world's creativity. The fact that Science World is now a reality is a big step towards that objective.

Whatever the final disposal decisions might be, there will still likely remain the opportunity and the influence to realize a concept that serves the long-term good of the community. It can be an environment the likes of which exists nowhere else on earth and it can establish British Columbia as a world-class tourist destination for the urban as well as the outdoors visitor.

2.Seaport Festival

Few cities in the world are as completely defined by sea and harbour as is Vancouver. The Sea Festival which will be 25 years running in 1988 does aspire to some maritime theming but is predominantly an unfocussed mixture of local attractions and elements.

Vancouver needs a marine celebration which is to the sea what The Abbotsford Airshow is to the sky. That is, a truly credible and quality extravaganza. To achieve this credibility at an international level, it is necessary to reach beyond the annual parading of local and familiar offerings. Proper tall ship visits, demonstrations of the world's unique special interest watercraft, vintage wooden boats, shipbuilding, world class competition such as Formula One or Unlimited Powerboat racing, major professional ski and stunt boat shows, state of the art technological and styling developments, more curiosity and surprise, and more creative maritime applications (such as the Boom Boat Ballet and the Harbour Symphony) are required.

As it is, the Sea Festival contributes much to the general level of activity and energy during the tourist season. The stated objectives of the Sea Festival are as follows: "(1) To create a festival for Vancouverites to enjoy and participate in the various events and festivities, (2) To provide a fun time for the people of the city and the surrounding areas, and (3) To serve as an attraction to bring tourists into the city, thereby obtaining favourable publicity for the city."

The existing event likely succeeds at the first two objectives, and to some extent at the third. But it needs conceptual rethinking and upgraded programming to achieve genuine international credibility. If this is ever done, the event could potentially become one of Vancouver's most effective tourism marketing elements.

3.Pacific Rim Festival

The concept of a major festival which enlightens us about the diversity and complexity of the cultural ties we have to the Pacific Rim is a natural. It is probably the most apt and timely of all the newer festivals.

The concept in the form of the Asia-Pacific Festival, appears to have been seriously, perhaps fatally flawed. The programming was only adequate. The peripheral activities, (the trade conference, the sports, the culinary and fashion components, the art exhibits, and the crafts) provided on paper that aura of credibility such international events seek to convey. The advertising and publicity came late but it was quite slick and carried an attractive consumer promise.

For some reason, the event did not attract nearly the numbers it might have, and for those who did attend, it could be argued that the consumer promise was not delivered.

The difficulties encountered internally and between the organizers and BC Place management are common knowledge. The presentation was second rate. The shabby exhibits in the vinyl tents comprising the "Asian-Pacific Village", the potboiler art displays, the midway of oriental fastfood, the overcommercialism, and the generally amateur quality of the decor and graphics conspired to obscure the reasonably high quality of much of the entertainment product.

But beyond all of the criticisms of organization, the most glaring weakness was one of environment. It may be that the BC Place complex as well as the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre are simply not appropriate venues for festivals. In a word, they are not festive. They are monolithic, over-policed, intimidating and torn between too many incompatible corporate commitments. Festivals need freedom and breathing room in an atmosphere of joyous spontaneity because that is what they are all about. In these restricted venues, such prerequisites are virtually excluded on the basis of policy alone.

This promising concept deserves elevation to a true international level. It needs a venue which will be comfortable for the ethnic groups it seeks to involve. It needs the serious commitment at the highest levels of the governments and major corporations of the Pacific Rim nations. Considering the implication of the immigration patterns and the economic potentials involved, this is a ball that should not be dropped.

4.Winter Carnival

The festivity of British Columbia tends to fade in winter. With the grey and the rain, the tents and banners are folded away and we retreat into depressing hibernation.

BC needs a massive winter celebration to keep the sense of festivity high. The Whistler Townsite is the tailor-made venue for such an event. It is true that Whistler and its two ski corporations produce an ongoing series of minor events during the season. But these do not generate the high-profile awareness required to sustain the perception of British Columbia as a destination offering year-round fun and festivity.

What is needed is an event of the intensity and scale of the Quebec Carnaval. This should be an event capable of generating international media coverage, providing evidence that the creative energy and activity of this province is indeed a sustained, year-round phenomenon. One massive winter festival, spectacularly produced, professionally packaged and aggressively marketed, can achieve that objective.

Such an annual event works best if it offers a key element of significant stature around which to build the celebration and to act as a fitting grand finale.

Whistler already has such an element. Again in 1988, Whistler Mountain hosts the World Cup Men's Downhill race as it has in alternate years. The special significance of this race is that it is the only regularly scheduled sporting event in British Columbia which draws every one of the world's top competitors. It is truly world class in both the quality of performance and the multinationalism of field.

To date, the race has been presented as an isolated event augmented by a few "World Cup Week" local promotional initiatives. As might be expected, it has done quite well on the basis of its spectacle, prestige, and sponsorship appeal alone.

But it is also an opportunity lost because The World Cup Downhill race is the only time that British Columbia is guaranteed U.S. network television coverage as well as similar exposure in Europe and Japan. Further, the audience profile for such coverage is precisely the desired tourism target group. There is no better time for Whistler to show its best face than when the whole world is watching.

The Whistler Winter Carnival could be the lead-up event to the World Cup Race. For the off years when the World Cup

Men's Downhill is not held at Whistler, the World Cup Women's Downhill could be sought. Other alternatives are the professional dual-slalom series or World Cup Giant Slalom or Slalom events.

Ideally, this lead-up carnival event would be designed so that the television cameras transform Whistler into a magical winter fantasy. The weather may not always cooperate but colour and light can compensate. The objective would be to create a Mardi Gras intensity of celebration and spectacle.

There are a number of presentations and activities which can lend these qualities to the celebration. Because so many people are skiing during the day, this event would most effectively have its emphasis after sunset and thus, the application of "Nights of Light" components would be key.

One of the more memorable moments to be experienced at Whistler is the annual New Year's Eve torchlight parade of skiers descending the two mountains. Dramatic lighting effects become quite magical in the tight confines of the valley. It would be possible to expand on this strong effect by introducing the concept of a fantasy light parade as is presented in the Disney Magic Kingdom, but here designed to a localized ski and winter theming.

The higher elevation of the benchlands where much of the recent development is underway, makes it possible to introduce a massive ice castle as well as other large ice sculptures as is done in at major carnivals such as Quebec, Kyoto,Japan, and at Winterlude in Ottawa.

More should also be made of the potential of Alpha Lake. Skating, ice shows, speed skating, ice bike races, sleigh rides, barrel jumping, a winter triathalon, an ice slide, cross-country competition, dogsleds, ice surface auto or motorcycle racing, and polar bear swims are just some of the other possibilities.

Above all, however, the townsite should look and feel festive and alive, and be given a filagree of light and colour that is spectacular and unique for this week when it becomes the focus of the international world of skiing.

5. The Native Olympic Games

This is an opportunity to initiate an high profile festive event which could offer a stimulating level of colour and tradition as well as a unique quality which, if well publicized would certainly draw worldwide major media attention.

The event would emulate the International Olympic Games in spirit and presentation including as many of the Olympic sports as might be seen practical. Olympic traditions such as the torch, the victory ceremonies, and the spectacle of opening and closing ceremonies would all be retained. But the "nations" represented in these Olympics would be the Indian Nations of North America. Thus, instead of the teams of the United States, the USSR, Japan, the United Kingdom marching in the opening ceremonies, it would be the teams of the Blackfoot, Navajo, Haida, and Iroquois.

There seems little doubt that with the great diversity of cultural activities that could be presented alongside the sporting events, this would be a colourful celebration. And while an event of such magnitude would be difficult and expensive to realize, it is a strong and positive idea which could draw world wide attention to the province and position British Columbia in a leadership role.

6. Chinatown Night

A byproduct of the prejudice practiced against the early Chinese immigrants was the creation of insular urban sectors known as "Chinatowns." Because the Chinese could not and often would not assimilate these areas assumed an exotic and foreign character and more than any other area of the cities, still retain that unique quality.

Vancouver's Chinatown area is one of the most compact and colourful in North America. With the recent addition of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, built in the Ming Dynasty tradition, and the first such garden ever built outside China, the experience is that much more complete.

While it is true that Chinatown is already a popular tourist attraction, there is an opportunity to heighten visibility and awareness while injecting more excitement to the area.

The awareness of Chinatown could be significantly heightened if the level of excitement and festive atmosphere that one finds there at the Chinese New Year could somehow be extended throughout the tourist season. It would be highly effective to present such festivity on a more regular basis, perhaps weekly. Friday evening would be a good choice for a scheduled street celebration with dragon dancers, fireworks, a drum performance and perhaps other special presentations such as traditional dance and martial arts.

To augment the atmosphere for this evening of celebration, as well as to strengthen the general appeal of the area, more environmental treatment of the area with colour and light would heighten the already exotic and exhuberant streetscape.

7.Fraser River Heritage Park

This is a project idea which was initial stages of development last year but has recently been abandoned. It was extremely ambitious and would have been difficult to accomplish but as a concept, it was very promising.

The Musqueum Indian Band had sought to acquire Deering Island and the adjacent shoreline around Celtic Harbour on the North Arm of the Fraser River. They were unsuccessful in acquiring the site. Nevertheless, the envisioned project had such potential that it merits consideration for, perhaps, another location.

The site offered a unique opportunity. There appeared to be the possibility of substantial federal funding support and the location was an appropriate one situated in an historically rich and diverse setting. As a native-initiated project, it would have carried influence and authenticity. The topography of shoreline, slough, island and river were aesthetically ideal. The existing elements of working fishing harbour, historic boatworks, netlofts, and the variety of bustling river activity created a dynamic quality to the site.

While no specific development intentions had yet been announced by the band, the concept which follows was one possible direction and serves to illustrate spectrum of possibility.

A possible approach would have been to create a heritage attraction which celebrates the The Fraser River itself and the peoples who have worked and lived along it. The Fraser River has a colourful history of which little evidence remains. The complex would have presented a living experience, crossing time periods, activities, and cultures to recreate for the visitor, a glimpse of life as it once was along the Fraser River.

A possible name for such a complex could be the Fraser River Heritage Park. The park would include as a major component the Coast Salish Nation Cultural Centre. While the complex itself would reflect the diversity of cultures, lifestyles and industries that the newcomers brought to river life, particular emphasis would be placed upon the indigenous peoples of the river and the revival of traditional skills and customs.

The entire project would likely have been developed in three stages, so planned that each could operate as an entity independent of the stages to follow.

Stage One would have involved the riverbank acreage and the existing Celtic Boatworks only. The boatworks buildings are of varying age, having been constructed between 1897 and 1939. The complex operated as a cannery until 1917, to be used as a fishing station until 1926 when the marine ways was built and a machine shop installed. The objective would have been to maintain these buildings as a functional boatworks but to give them period "dressing" and to prop the foreground area with vintage fishboats and equipment.

Overlooking the restored boatworks as well as the fishing fleet in Celtic Harbour, a first-class smoked salmon restaurant would have included a menu of traditional native cooking as well as a broader range of fare.

Adjacent the salmon restaurant, a Salish Nation Cultural Centre would demonstrate and market traditional crafts and serve as an interpretation centre for the heritage of the Coast Salish Nation. Joining the restaurant and the cultural centre would be a traditional salmon smoking shed. To the other side of the restaurant, a replica of a Coast Salish village, circa 1800, would allow visitors to view native lifestyles as found by the early white explorers.

The second stage of development would focus on the existing netloft building at the eastern end of Deering Island and directly facing the boatworks and restaurant. This netloft, and the surrounding wharves, would form the "big house" complex, a live performance area, shops and food outlets, and potentially a Museum of the Fraser River.

Stage Three would have been to develop the remainder of Deering Island as the Fraser River Heritage Park. The central feature would be the authentic reproduction of a turn-of-the-century river town incorporating aspects of the variety of cultural styles and commercial establishments. The town would consist of a narrow, meandering main street as well as a rambling wooden walkway along the river's edge. There would be a town square with a performance bandstand and the site would be well propped with wagons and equipment. Along the water's edge, there would be a well themed dockside area, a landing for a variety of period boats which could be used for short river tours.

The east end of the island would be treated in a "to the goldfields" theme, a jumping-off point to the Cariboo. At the very eastern tip would be the "Goldfields Saloon" and moored adjacent, a sternwheeler which offered extended trips up the Fraser.

Other possible elements were a functional salmon cannery marketing a special house label of canned salmon supplied by the native fishing fleet. Also an oriental garden and market area, as well as a Chinatown with Joss House and Buddhist Temple. To the west end of the island would be Deering Farm, a replica Richmond farm with Victorian farmhouse and dairy barn featuring children's petting zoo, a wildfowl pond, a fishing dock, and a family picnic park with children's play complex in Salish art theming.

There would be four target audiences to whom this complex would appeal. The first and most important would be the tourist audience. These may be visitors from other parts of Canada, from the United States and other countries, or British Columbians vacationing within their home province. For this audience, the complex would provide the right balance of education and entertainment. A cultural and heritage-based tourist attraction aimed at the desirable market segment could be particularly successful if it could be both credible and fun. The level of activity, discovery, and surprise could provide the ambiance that would assure this.

The second audience would be local. The people of the City of Vancouver. This group provides the biggest opportunity for return visitation. To assure many return visits, the complex would have to be an enjoyable environment at which to dine, to return for a variety of entertainment offerings, to shop, or just a pleasant place to come to enjoy the aesthetics of the exquisite river setting. The mix would have to be kept rich and changing while the atmosphere and the chemistry would always have to deliver a desirable experience.

The third audience is the educational audience. School tours. Heritage buffs. People interested primarily in the history and traditions of the Coast Salish Nation and the other groups who populated the Banks of the Fraser. For these groups, a credible learning experience would have to be provided. The story should be presented accurately, authentically, and with great integrity.

The fourth audience would be the native people themselves. The Salish, as well as other bands from throughout North America. This project had the potential to provide a captivating presentation of a rich heritage that could instill pride and a renewed touch with the past for all native people and particularly for the young.

There is not currently a major heritage or native attraction of this type in the lower mainland area. Such a tourist facility would help to fill the need for new and high-quality attractions to keep pace with the heightened awareness of British Columbia since Expo 86. Finally, such an attraction promises significant potential contributions in the areas of economic development, employment, tourism, and heritage conservation.

8. The Agrofair

There is much appeal in the concept of an old time agricultural exposition. Particularly if it is held in an urban setting.

Because British Columbia already has an agricultural fair, and because it is held in the centre of Vancouver this is more a rethink of the Pacific National Exhibition than it is a new concept.

There are fewer than a dozen agrofairs left in North American cities and fewer still in the actual heart of a major metropolis. Most of them disappeared with the "Modern Age" but before pop nostalgia was born.

The Pacific National Exhibition has been dismissed by many as corny, tacky, dated, lowbrow, and without much redeeming social and cultural value. Pig racing and aquaclowns, demolition derbies and gadget hawkers, greasy food and midway rides, beauty pageants and parade floats, are considered the stuff of the junk culture that the "enlightened" people of the 80s love to disdain.

All the more remarkable then that the PNE is as popular now as it ever was.

The research that probes the reasons for attending the PNE may be flawed. The key reason given for visitation is the Midway yet most who give this reason do not visit the Playland other than during the exhibition. The same is true of the other "reasons for visit."

What more likely motivates the Pacific National Exhibition visitor is ritual. One simply "goes to the PNE" without really needing a clear perception of what it is supposed to be because the day at the fair it is a Vancouver rite of autumn.

Clearly, its underlying appeal is the fact that it is an alternate environment. In this computer age of Star Wars, Steven Spielberg, Atari, Miami Vice, Omnimax, David Bowie, EPCOT Centre, NASA, slick television, slick film, slick magazines, and slick living, it is a throwback. It is Cornpone Graffitti.

The essence of this appeal can be found in the genesis of the PNE as an agricultural fair. The style, the content, the philosophy, and the personality of the event have been shaped by rural values. It is the retention of many of these values that accounts for the survival of this anomoly into the 1980s.

Many of these intrinsic strengths are being diluted and obscured by the questionable strategy of the yearly change of image with the objective of looking "different." To this end, the event attempts to be perceived as "High Tech" one year or "Polynesian" the next. Thus, in the attempt to fabricate a contemporary marketing "hook," the entire thrust is focussed on a peripheral element ignoring the likelihood that the exhibition survives primarily because it is a loveable dinosaur.

For the purposes of tourism marketing, the notion of a traditional old time agricultural exhibition in an urban setting, one of the last of a vanishing species, is a very appealing one. The investment in mediocre annual theming devices which can seldom afford to be executed with excellence, is less so. It would seem infinitely more effective to invest in the permanent enhancement of the traditional appeal and to create and reinforce a strong and consistant image of the product.

The problem and the solution is one of definition and perception. It is more a marketing weakness than it is a programming problem. For the most part, the PNE continues to deliver the tradition. That is the underlying appeal and the opportunity is to enhance and focus on the appeal of the country tradition that is served up in city style.

The Pacific National Exhibition should become more of an Agrofair by creating higher profile for the agricultural components. More country corn. String bands and a bluegrass jamboree. Old farm machinery puffing steam. Plough horse and tractor pulls. Farming arts and crafts and demonstrations. Ranching. Perhaps some longhorn cattle. Show branding and calving. Some cowboys. Cutting horses. Perhaps some rodeo. Hayrides. A barn where city kids can jump in the hayloft and milk a cow.

The changes do not have to be radical. But the money now spent to produce second-class theming could be redirected to giving first-class treatment to the traditional character. And the marketing could focus on creating some clear definition of what, exactly, the event is: a time-warp, an annual ritual of escape into a nostalgic alternate environment.

9. Britannia Festival

There are festivals and national days for most of the major ethnic groups but no such event for the group which considers itself the "founding" one.

One of the research recommendations regarding United States visitors was this: "Because British Columbia has a British image, a very positive association for most Californians, it is possible to emphasize the English traditions and history in an attempt to make the entire province more unique and distinctive."

The charm and intrigue that the Americans perceive in the Britishness of the province could be further enforced by a large, high-profile Britfest. The logical venue would be

Victoria. It might co-incide with the Royal Victorian Boat Race. Royal attendance would always be a priority objective and the entire city would be encouraged to swath itself in Union Jacks.

To be truly effective in marketing terms, such a festival should be more than a simple intensification of the existing trappings. It must produce some newsworthy and exportable excitement capable of captivating the North American media. Each year, something very British and very big should beset Victoria to move on to the province and perhaps down the coast. If not a Royal, then perhaps a Mick Jagger or an Elton John or a top cricket side or a series of matches between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal. Perhaps a tour of the Crown Jewels or a replica of Stonehenge.

The valuable side-effect to such an annual challenge would be to keep Victoria sharply tuned to the nature of it's British appeal to tourists and in so doing, perhaps stem some of the homogenization that has been allowed to compomise the personality of that city.

10. The Greatest Show On Earth

Imagine the concept of a revival of Barnum & Bailey's old time travelling circus, "The Greatest Show On Earth," but with a very different updated and contemporized personality, as a touring ambassador for the Province of British Columbia.

The idea would be to package the festivity and energy of British Columbia into a compact 21st Century high tech travelling roadshow, a distillation of the Expo spirit in a colourful, exhuberent kit of parts which exposes the talent and creativity and progress of BC.

The show could move by train or truck caravan. It would be primarily an entertainment presentation, but also a vehicle to bring the message of British Columbia in a sophisticated and exciting way that Americans might not expect.

The show would work two seasons. For the home season during the mid-summer months, it would tour the province, bringing entertainment and spreading the sense of festivity throughout the regions.

In the off season, it would head south into the United States to spread the BC Spirit. The key to its' success would be the perception it creates of an alive, innovative, surprising and diverse destination peopled by friendly, turned-on, open, energetic hosts.

Designed creatively and presented with great elan, such a visiting extravaganza could be a high profile and world famous advertisment for "The Greatest Place On Earth."

11. Gateway To The Rockies

Alberta appears to enjoy most of the benefit of The Rocky Mountain parks despite the fact that British Columbia is the province of mountains.

Because the most popular approach to the Alberta Rockies is through British Columbia, there seems a clear opportunity to somehow shift some of the association with the National Parks, and the benefits derived, even though they are in another province.

One way this might be accomplished would be through the development of a "GateWay To The Rockies" entertainment and educational complex, a first-class attraction with a "mountain" theming. This park could incorporate a mix of high-quality family attractions ranging from an Imax helicopter tour of the mountains of the world to thrill rides with mountain theming, indigenous animals of the Rockies, a mountain music review, a museum of the high country, mountain-themed eating establishments, oldtimers and storytelling, a geology centre and the story of mining in British Columbia, sponsored exhibits from the industry, exhibits from the Provincial Parks Service, and perhaps all of this built around an inviting hot spring and swimming pool.

To be successful in diverting Banff and Jasper-bound travellers, this attraction would have to be a "must-see" stopover. To achieve that, it must be kept an extremely high-quality presentation, virtually on a par with the experience of the parks themselves.

12. America Week

With the largest potential tourism market and the largest source of tourism revenue lying in the adjacent nation, it might be appropriate from time to time, to recognize that nation in a neighbourly and flattering manner.

One possibility is to create an America Week in which British Columbia hosts the one ethnic celebration from which the rest of Canada shies. This would be a recognition of ties and freindship at a very festive level with a "Between Friends" theming of Stars and Stripes and Maple Leaves.

The province would, for this occasion, take on a Can-Am festivity and British Columbians would be encouraged to wear buttons, display window banners and bumper stickers and generally undertake gestures which tell Americans that they are welcome and considered good and valued neighbours.

The development of interesting events tailored to the celebration could aid in raising the awareness of such an initiative. One example might be the establishment of an annual event called The Friendship Games. These games would feature competition between amateur athletes from British Columbia and Washington State. Yet more ambitious, but promising wider appeal is a Friendship Games with teams from British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, Oregon, Northern California and Southern California

Of course, America Week would also be the basis for an enormous publicity campaign, an opportunity for considerable media coverage, and the hook for increased promotional package activity and advertising awareness.

13. BC Exposition Ship

The launching of a floating exposition ship, a seagoing ambassador which would bring the BC Spirit to major cities of the Pacific Rim could have an enormous effect on the global perception of British Columbia, particularly in the areas of tourism and trade.

This ship would be inviting and festive with an emphasis on fun and entertainment. More important, it would be a floating showcase of almost everything British Columbia has to offer. It would convey the energy and creativity of the cities, the beauty of the province, the friendliness of our people, the ingenuity of our economic development, and the investment and trading potential.

Being so unique and ambitious an idea, this floating advertisement would, by example, symbolize the ingenuity and progress of British Columbia and in so doing, generate enormous interest and press coverage wherever it travelled.

14. Hat Creek

The excellent restoration at Hat Creek House is all the more significant because the buildings at Hat Creek are the only major concentration of original Cariboo architecture which can be found close to the Trans-Canada highway. In fact, Hat Creek offers by far the most convenient way for a visitor to get a taste of the Cariboo and perhaps a taste to explore further into the region.

Still, Hat Creek House seems rather forlorn. Few people visit and those who do have little to do but squint through the windows.

There is an opportunity to give this attraction more activity and more sense of visitor involvement. Hat Creek House would, for example, make a wonderful eating place. It could be a proper refreshment stop on the Cariboo Trail as it was intended to be. The attraction needs live animals and stagecoach rides and period costume and activity in the barns. It also needs critical mass. It is too small an attraction to rate as a destination, and perhaps to small and under-communicated to even draw passing traffic from the Trans-Canada Highway.

The Cariboo features a style of pioneer architecture which is unique. There is a Cariboo vernacular. Throughout the area, supurb examples of indigenous British Columbia architecture are quickly vanishing. Within a few miles of Hat Creek House, there are at least a dozen abandoned farm buildings including a log general store, and a small schoolhouse. Many of these structures are built with dove-tailed square timber construction. Throughout the Cariboo and the Chilcotin, there are hundreds of such heritage buildings rotting in the fields.

The acreage around Hat Creek House would be ideal for an assemblage of the best of the local such pioneer architecture as has been done in many areas of the United States. Such an assemblage would provide the size and setting for an active heritage attraction in an area which badly lacks a tourism focal point.

15. Transportation Heritage Centre

British Columbia now has a Historic Transportation Centre as well as an historic aircraft collection and a maritime museum. The first two are removed from the center of population and activity and the third is hard put to properly protect its collection. The considerable amount of railway heritage is scattered throughout the province.

One area of the Expo 86 site still offers an ideal location to assemble a limited but very selective collection of the very best of BC transportation history as compelling tourist attraction and a legacy of the theme of the world exposition.

The Roundhouse Buildings, which already feature Engine 374, the first locomotive to reach the west coast, would make an excellent transportation museum. The docks of the Marine Plaza were designed for exhibit. With some additional cover and an integrating landscape, incorporating food and merchandising facilities, a first-class mixed experience heritage attraction is possible. The objective would be to develop a "living" type of museum with demonstrations, rides, and a very much "hands-on" experience.

Such a use is appropriate for a building complex which was the western extremity of one of the world's greatest transportation systems and for a site on which was held one of the greatest transportation-related events of all time.

16. The Children's Centre

Another proposal for use of The Roundhouse complex was submitted to B.C. Enterprise by The Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences. The proposal envisioned the buildings, turntable plaza, and adjacent land as a new Community/cultural facility to be known as The Roundhouse Children's Centre.

The rationale suggested that this project would allow immediate redevelopment of the building without having to wait for a future adjacent community, as with a retail development. Secondly, it argued that as a heritage structure, the buildings should be preserved in an "open context" and that the suggested adjacent parkland will be part of the open space designation for the overall False Creek development. And finally, that the high profile, public use will not only represent a significant first development for B.C. Enterprise but will also add value to those development sites surrounding it.

This is in fact a proposal to move the successful Children's Festival to a permanent home and to expand it to a true year-round operation, retaining The Children's Festival itself within a highly promotable 14 week summer schedule of performances, attractions and activities. The centre would encourage outreach programs in order to establish a Creativity Centre and would also house a Study Centre to include ongoing seminars, workshops, discussions, and conference activities.

As a focal point in a key location of the BC Place plan, the Roundhouse is seen to benefit from the levels of activity the Children's Centre would bring to the area and also benefit from the open site lines from the surrounding streets.

Many precedents are included in the proposal including the child's play areas, theatrical presentations, and street entertainment of Expo 86, the Tivoli Gardens of Copenhagen, Denmark, the York Quay Centre, Studio Theatre, and the Kaleidoscope Children's area of the Toronto Harbourfront Project, and Legoland in Billund, Denmark. The Vancouver Children's Festival itself is offered as the prototype for the style and substance that would be brought to the Roundhouse Children's Centre.

The benefits outlined include tourism development, in that the Centre will become a promotable and attractive destination and a world centre of "energy, ideas and information with an emphasis on the Asia-Pacific basin." The centre will create part-time and full-time jobs in administrtaion and organization. It will provide work for many of the community's performers and the space will be available for various community development projects. The centre will respect the heritage legacy of the Roundhouse and Engine 374. Finally, the centre will make its immediate surroundings more valuable and attractive for development because it will become an instant "people-place" and create a positive environment.

17. The Sound & Light Show

This is a show concept which has been presented with some success at the national capitol in Ottawa as well as at the legislature buildings in Quebec City. It is called the "Son et Lumiere", or the Sound and Light Show.

After dusk, the parliament buildings are bathed in a kaleidoscope of changing computerized lighting and audio effects which highlight a story of the nation's history.

The basic show, as it is now presented in Ottawa, is limited. The use of legislature buildings as a medium for such a sound and light show would be greatly enhanced by the introduction of additional theatrical technology such as high power projectors capable of creating clear graphic and pictorial material on the buildings, or the use of electronic synthsizers, lasers, strobe lights, smoke effects and even pyrotechnics.

The existing presentations have been well received and have drawn as many as 50,000 viewers on warm summer evenings and always provided an unforgettable experience.

The concept and its effect would be particularly ideal for Victoria because of the very high visibility of the legislative buildings from so many vantage points in the heart of the tourist activity.

18. Haida War Canoes

The voyage of the "Lootaas" Haida canoe from Vancouver to "Haida Gwaii", the Queen Charlotte Islands, in June of 1987 was a rather soul-stirring and awe-inspiring sight. Moreover, the event had an sense of authenticity about it. The experience was a purely British Columbian phenomenon and one of the few such experiences that are indigenous to this province.

Imagine then the effect of a flotilla of Haida War Canoes with authentically costumed and armed crews as a regular presentation for those who visit the north coast and as an occasional visiting contingent to major events throughout the province.

The artistic heritage of the native peoples of the northwest has become internationally recognized. There is now underway an active revival of the lost arts and skills of the west coast native bands. The retrieved craftsmanship of the Haida canoe builders is probably the most remarkable example of this revival because these vessels, in their many styles, are among the most seaworthy and graceful ever designed and built.

The visual impact of a convoy of fully-manned Haida War Canoes at speed would leave the visitor with one of those once-in-a-lifetime indelible memories, like the massed pipes and drums at Edinburgh Castle or a funereal marching band in New Orleans. Because it is so intrinsically symbolic of the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, and because it is an initiative of native people, it is also highly fundable, marketable, and sponsorable concept.

19. Art in the Streets

To significantly shift the perception of British Columbia away from the deeply entrenched wilderness image and toward a more urban/cultural experience image, a degree of overcorrection is probably in order. The more visibility given to the creative energy of the cities, the quicker the perception will begin to change.

One option which would effectively contribute to that end would be a program which brings the performing arts and the visual arts and artists out into the streets. To be effective, such a program must reach far beyond the Stanley Park Sunday Afternoon Painters and the Granville Mall/Bastion Square buskers. To have credibility, it must draw out the mainstream professionals. Montreal and San Francisco have accomplished this and it is a common practice throughout Europe.

For two weeks each year, venues could be provided and leading artists encouraged to work outdoors in the parks and streets and foyers of the city core. Major corporations would be encouraged to sponsor artists who could work in the lobbies of corporate headquarters and in the foyers of major banks and retailers. Others might sponsor artists to work in the midtown parks and squares, in the transit stations, or in the major public buildings.

The key to success would lie in proliferation. The cities must be alive with art and performance and for this, the government and corporate support must be significant.

Inevitably, the effect of such an event will be an overlay of pleasurable civility to our already pleasurable city cores. It will also create a synergy between the general public and the art community that will heighten the cultural awareness of the average person and perhaps encourage the artists to adopt a higher visibility on a ongoing basis.

When an area is energized with art and artists of quality and it visibly exudes cultural excitement and competence, it is that much closer to being perceived as the kind of tourism destination desired and sought by the upscale tourism target market.

20. The Ultimate Ironman Event:Snow,Earth & Water

There is an annual event that has become a tradition at Whistler Mountain each May 24 weekend. It is the Snow Earth and Water race. It involves teams of 5 or the occasional "ironman" who completes all sections alone. The concept is novel. A skier starts at the top of Whistler Mountain and takes a downhill run until the snow runs out. Carrying skis, poles, and boots, he then runs to the base of the mountain and hands the baton to a cyclist who races the 20k circuit of Alpha Lake. There, the baton is handed to a pair of canoists who paddle the length of the lake, negotiate a swift running river to a second lake which they cross to hand off to a distance runner waiting on the far shore. The runner then covers a hilly cross country course to the finish line.

This event gets little publicity beyond Whistler. The participation and the audience is essentially comprised of Whistler residents, the regular ski crowd and incremental others drawn by word-of-mouth.

The concept, however, offers an enormous opportunity. The "Ironman/Ironwoman" type of athletic event, like the triathalon for example, a natural outgrowth of the marathon craze, is at the height of its' popularity. With emphasis on fitness, health, and personal discipline, it is the kind of event which is associated with the demographics and the psychographics of the desired tourism target market.

To that add the unique mix of the local topography over which these competitions are run and you realize a sporting event which would not only draw world-wide media attention but in so doing, would also showcase the unique beauty of the province.

The event would be the Ultimate Ironman Race to establish the world's greatest multi-element endurance athletes. This race would not feature teams, but rather it would be limited to individual athletes. The racer would start at the top of Whistler Mountain, ski to bare ground, ride a mountain bike around the Lost Lake mountain trail to Alpha Lake, swim the length of the lake, ride a racing bike to Lions Bay, kayak to Point Grey, then run a half marathon to a finish line in downtown Vancouver.

There are many athletes who can complete this but such an event has never been organized. It would draw international attention, make wonderful television, and demonstrate the unique proximity of spectacular wilderness to one of the world's most beautiful cities.

21. THE FESTIVAL OF CELEBRATIONS

In summer, Vancouver has a multitude of smaller but interesting celebrations, ethnic days, community days, arts and crafts festivals and fairs and a variety of other such events.

Some examples: Greek Days, The Country Living Festival, May Day, The Medieval Faire, Celebration Days, The Canyon Jamboree, Dogwood Day, Indian Days, The Portuguese Festival, The Salmon Festival, Golden Spike Days, Italian Day, The Pow Wows & Tribal Dances, Pioneer Days, Summerfest, Loggers Days, The Blueberry Fest, and countless regattas, derbies, street markets, sports, arts, craft, sea and music festivals and fairs. Around Victoria one finds much the same kind of activity.

Individually, these events, which number in the hundreds, do not enjoy very high levels of publicity of awareness. If, however, they could be presented as components of a larger summer-long interrelated "Festival of Festivals" umbrella, two clear advantages could be realized.

Firstly, there would be a pooling of publicity resources and the diverse program could be more effectively communicated to a broader market base. Secondly, with the sense of this cumulative activity and energy given a higher profile, the multiplicity of these events would serve to reinforce the perception of festive activity in British Columbia.

Seattle has accomplished this quite effectively by incorporating a number of events held over the summer into the overall Seafair publicity campaign. Most of Seattle's community and ethnic festivals are presented as part of the Seafair activities and thus benefit from inclusion in all Seafair material. Some examples: The Ballard Norwegian Constitution Day, The Seattle Yacht Club Sailing Race, The Burien 4th of July Parade, The Kent Cornucopia Days, The Milk Carton Derby, The Olde Queen Anne Days, The Lynnwood Parade and Lynn-O-Rama, The Historic Columbia City Days, The Miss Seafair Fashion Show, The Chinatown International District Festival, The Bike Festival, The Sailboard Race & Beach Party, The Seafair Pirate's Landing and Salmon Bake, The Seafair Day at Longacres Races, The West Seattle HI-YU, The Redmond Derby Days Parade, The Seattle Triathalon, The Miss Seafair talent Contest, The Des Moines Waterland Festival, The Seafair Indian Days, The White Center Jubilee Days, The Wallingford District Kiddies parade, The Seafair Clowns Arrival, The Hispanic Days, The West Seattle Grand Parade, The Mardi Gras parade, The Hot Air Balloon Race, The Chinatown Parade, The Hispanic Community Festival, The Rainier District Pow-Wow, Bon Odori Japanese Celebration. The Greater University District parade, The Miss Seafair Scholarship Coronation, The US Navy Arrival, The All Hands Show & Dance. The Greenwood District Parade, The Magnolia Festival, The Seafair Fun Run, The Seafair Torchlight Parade, The Lake City Salmon Bake, The Black Community Mardi Gras, The Magnolia Summer Festival & Kiddie's Parade, The Lake City Pioneer Day Parade, The Honour America Celebration and many more community events.

All of these seperate events and festivals are treated as part of the major event and all benefit from its high profile.

22. Traditional Ethnic Folkfest

National Geographic Magazine called Vancouver "A City of Nations". Certainly the strong ethnic mix creates a cosmopolitan quality which would be appealing to the desired target group. There are already a number of ethnic "days" such as the Greek and Italian, and a number of other events hosted by ethnic communities. As well, the Vancouver Folk Music Festival features many ethnic and visiting performers as did the Asia-Pacific Festival.

Recently, a small scale event called Carnival '87 attempted to present a series of traditional multicultural folkloric presentations at a number of community venues but it was not well marketed or attended.

There is an opportunity for the development of a very festive ethnic celebration here. One event that the City of Vancouver does not have is an encompassing traditional folk festival which celebrates the broad spectrum of ethnic populations at one time and at a single venue. Such an festival could be effective in spreading understanding and goodwill in a city which is absorbing so many newcomers. It would also provide a rich educational experience for the young, and particularly the children of the ethnic groups.

Such a purely multicultural event would be one of the very few anywhere to involve so ethnically diverse a program. Virtually every nationality group in Vancouver has traditional musical and dance performers, traditional costuming and instruments, and traditional arts, crafts and cuisine. For an event such as this, the local talent would be augmented by leading performers imported from the various homelands.

In addition to its strong appeal to the desired tourism target group, such an festival event will also reinforce the cosmopolitan image and cultural nature of our city.

23. Military Tattoo & Highland Games

With the U.S. Research placing such high value on the "Old Country British Atmosphere" another presentation which would strongly appeal to American visitors would be a British Columbia Military Tattoo. Currently, the main source of experienced tattoo production is in the Maritime Provinces.

Tattoos are presented as occasional touring stadium events but have never been closely tied to the cultural image of the city or effectively used to reinforce the "foriegn" appeal of the province.

Such an event could be organized as a professional troupe whose home base might be Victoria. The Tattoo would be presented on a regular basis in Victoria and Vancouver with visits to other centres. Periodically, it could also travel as a provincial ambassador to the United States.

Another spectacle with likely appeal to Americans is the Highland Games. This, as well as folkloric dancing, a parade of period uniforms and artillery, and military maneouvers provide other components to fill out a tattoo presentation as a full travelling road show.

24. Themed Towns.

It has become fashionable for some town councils or chambers of commerce to decide to renovate downtown business sections along an adopted theme. The chosen theme usually plays upon some presumed resemblance to another country or another historical era and is then applied like veneer to the existing architecture. These are not "living museum" towns which restore actual history to an actual period, but rather they are movie set facades and they seldom work without some strong and authentic basis for being.

North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Winthrop, Washington, and Ashcroft, British Columbia have wild west cowtown themes while Leavenworth, Washington and Kimberly, British Columbia and Smithers, British Columbia have opted for Bavarian motifs.

These transformations are inevitably undertaken in order to revitalize the economies of communities suffering hard times. In the case of Kimberley, the program has not only aided the transition from a mining to a tourism based economy but it has also rekindled community spirit and created the enormous outpouring of volunteerism needed to undertake the running of such sizeable events as the Julyfest & Homecoming, the Songfest Gospel Music Festival, and Winterfest.

Generally, Kimberly has exemplified one of the more successful of the town themings. The only strong criticism levelled against these developments is that they often obliterate the genuine roots of the community. North Battleford was never a Hollywood gunfighter town and Kimberly is a western Canadian mining town which has absolutely nothing to do with Barvaria. A revitalization program such as the one in Nelson makes creative use of the town's actual past as well as its strongest elements. Even without the architecture as a basis, Chemainus related directly to its genuine history.

Many would argue that Kimberly, by emphasising its mining town heritage and the Rocky Mountain high, would have been equally successful and far more authentic and credible. It is particularly opportune when a community has a genuine and unique heritage around which it can build an authentic themed revitalization.

Two such opportunities come readily to mind. The first is in the City of Grand Forks and the second is in the City of Trail.

The Doukhobour culture of the Kootaneys seems a rather underplayed opportunity. Americans in particular, as well as others, are fascinated by anything Russian. This is probably because there is so little Russian presence in the United States.

The City of Grand Forks has the opportunity to apply a Russian/Doukhobour architectural theming to the area. Grand Forks has the advantage of a significant number of existing special interest buildings including at least three of the surviving communal village clusters, a Doukhobour co-op Flour Mill, a Doukhobour heritage museum in an original communal house, the Veregin homestead, and the original Doukhobour colony store. They have a performing choir and dance troup and the beginnings of a rather good Russian cuisine in some of the local restaurants.

Likewise, the city of Trail has a strong Italian heritage which has physically flavoured the architecture of the older sections of that community. The first Italians arrived to work the railway and the smelter in 1896 and by 1910 there were over 400 settled along Trail Creek in the narrow strip between Smelter Hill and Lookout Mountain, known locally as "The Gulch." They built a community of neat, trim houses which clustered up the hillside and the aesthetics were reminiscent of communities in Southern Italy. The Cristoforo Colombo Lodge, formed in 1905 still goes strong and is at the center of the Italian musical, drama, sports and festival activities of the community.

Many of the Italian families have now extended into the third and fourth generations. Their homes and businesses tend to cluster along Rossland Avenue and up the West Trail and Annabel hillsides, where the terraced streets are built in the traditional manner of their homeland. The merchandise in the shops still reflects the heritage, importing many specialties from Italy, importing carloads of grapes, and selling wicker wrapped wine carboys displayed on the sidewalk. The area still looks and feels like like an

Italian hilltown. It is the perfect opportunity for a natural heritage-driven community theming development.

What is now needed for both communities is a catalyst to begin integration of all these existing elements and a cohesive masterplan for architectural enhancement and effective marketing of the area as a cultural tourism destination.

25. Logging World

With the lumber industry so intrinsic to the history and economy of British Columbia, there would seem a strong rationale for a logging-themed major entertainment and exhibition park.

The logical location for such a complex would be the existing Forestry Museum in Duncan which authentically presents most aspects of the history of logging as well as featuring a narrow gauge steam train ride and a large collection of machinery and buildings. For show value, an expanded version of the existing Logger's Sports Days presentations could be added as well as a logging-themed amusement component (for example, rides like The Spartree

Drop, a Scream Machine through a stand of timber, or a looping ride in the shape of a giant axe) Also incorporated would be a science-centre style of interpretive educational component, demonstrations, models, vintage logging equipment, and perhaps an industry-related conference or meeting centre incorporating a wood industry research library, technological displays of innovative wood products, wood hobbies home wood applications and if possible, a revival of the old Granville Island Forestry Centre.

Such a themed complex would integrate nicely as the entertainment component of the proposed Living Forestry Project and Ecomuseum be a pivotal element of the Island Corridor development.

26: Omnimax B.C.

Presently, the screen and projection hardware for the Omnimax is still in the dome theatre of the Science World and the Arts, Science and Technology people are negotiating with the Imax Corporation to reactivate the theatre.

Also, stored at the MGM film laboratories in Los Angeles is the Omnimax film footage of Expo 86 which was shot during the final month of the exhibition. This footage covers most aspects of the event and includes several breathtaking ride experiences and aerials.

This production was undertaken to allow British Columbians and others to relive the Expo experience as a prelude to a "Beyond '86" Omnimax tour of the province which it was hoped would eventually run at the Expo Centre. There are few subjects more perfectly suited to the Omnimax medium than the province of British Columbia.

A spectacular Omnimax film of British Columbia would encourage Vancouver visitors to move out and explore the rest of British Columbia while reminding Vancouverites that some of the best scenery on earth is at their doorstep and some of the best vacations of all can be had without leaving the province.

There are about three dozen Omnimax films in distribution. Because they are shorter in length than regular feature films, a double bill is often presented. An Omnimax film on the grandeur of British Columbia would be an appropriate accompanying feature to any Science World presentation.

Equally important, there are now Omnimax and Imax theatres in over 40 major cities throughout the world. The distribution of a first-class production will ensure that the spectacle of British Columbia's natural splendour will be experienced at a level of realism that no other medium can deliver.

27. Divali

One of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in British Columbia is that of the East Indian community. While this community does celebrate some holidays and festivals, they are not of a size or level of visibility that allows them to contribute significantly to the overall perception of festivity in the city.

This is a missed opportunity because festivals like Holi and Divali are among the most colourful and festive in the world. They combine religious ceremonies with feasts, fireworks, parades, and other traditional amusements, For the Divali Festival, which honours the goddess of wealth and beauty, Hindus decorate the streets and their houses with lights and hold processions of light.

Divali is held in October, a month in which there is little festivity in Vancouver and Victoria. To encourage and support the introduction of such an unusual and colourful celebration would add a major component to the cosmopolitan mix of the urban festivity and would be a strong marketing element against a tourism target group which seeks a foriegn and cosmopolitan cultural travel experience.

28. Fountains of Fire

This is a concept for somewhere is Northern British Columbia where there is need for a unique themed attraction on the traveller's "must-see" list.

The idea is to create a landscape of fire utilizing natural gas burnoff. This would be a garden of sculptured dragons and monsters, a landscape of volcanoes and geysers, burning waters, a theme park of the macabre that could bring interest and traffic to an area which might be otherwise bleak and unfrequented. If it is far enough north, it might be combined with the phenomenon of the Northern Lights, perhaps augmented by laser and fibreoptic technology to complete a very unique after dark tourism offering.

29. Voyage into the Age of Steam

While the Royal Hudson trip is a phenomenal experience, it is also one that fails to maximize its potential. To be able to steam out of a major city, turn a few corners, and suddenly be travelling one of the world's great wilderness seacoasts under full steam is surely a world class tourism offering.

But the Royal Hudson steam train trip and the whole Howe Sound experience could be so much more.

Interest and romance at ground level is sparse. It lacks a sense of theatre. It is rich with spectacle but short on fun and surprise.

There are a number of elements which could elevate the experience. The route could, for example, be treated as an outdoor museum of British Columbia's steam era. Vintage steam equipment, trains, tractors, donkey engines, logging equipment, large marine steam engines, railway debris, and other interesting artifacts which are too large for museum display but capable of open exhibit could be spaced along the route. The stops could be enhanced by period railway and other themed architecture.

This is particularly opportune at Britannia Beach. For the most part, the infrastructure has not been given even the simplest treatment appropriate to the experience. Finally, The trip could benefit by a light-hearted theatrical experience. perhaps an old-fashioned Grey Fox style train robbery,

This attraction simply has not been enhanced. So little has been made of the food and merchandising opportunities. By filling out the sense of adventure and discovery, it would also be possible to bolster the marketing thrust. The essence of this attraction is so strong, it deserves the incorporation of some attractive trimmings.

30. Christmas in British Columbia

Easterners often remark that Christmas in Vancouver somehow doesn't feel like Christmas. But while it is true that some of the traditions of Christmas seem less visible here, the only element that they are really missing is snow. There is no crunch underfoot and no steamy breathe in the cold night air, and the panic of last minute shopping is not compounded by blizzard and snowdrift. For this, most British Columbians are thankful.

Christmas in Vancouver does, however, provide one of the true phenomena among British Columbian rituals and that is the sailing of the Carol Ships. The lights of the Carol Ships somehow compensate for much of the magic lost through the lack of snow and that same sense pervades the courthouse plazas with their twinkling forest of tiffany-lighted trees.

If a city cannot be blanked in white at Christmastime, then it could make its own light. The streets could become a long canopy of arches of light. The two weeks from December 15th to New Years Eve could be declared the Nights of Lights. All citizens could be encouraged to light their homes and the trees and lawns and the city should take the lead in Christmas lighting the public spaces. While many homeowners already do this and in some areas, the effect is quite strong and concentrated, a city-wide bathing of light could create the missing level of Christmas Magic.

There are of course specific events which could provide high impact expressions of the Nights of Light effect. Even though it did not draw the numbers hoped for, the "Christmas at B.C. Place" concept was a promising beginning to creating a purely British Columbian tradition.

The intention at BC Place was to provide entertainment and food and to create a meeting place of celebration. The

Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre with its protection from the December winds may have been an even better venue. In any case, the real weakness was the lack of things to do. It was too cold to sit for a concert and the venue was too remote from the Christmas bustle, but mainly, there was little to do.

A concept that has worked elsewhere involves the Christmas Concert combined with the "one of a kind" market. So while the entertainment and food is being enjoyed, one can also use one's valuable gift-hunting time wandering a bazaar of unusual, surprising and exotic one-off gift treasures. In the final weeks of Christmas, everyone is looking for that perfect and unique gift idea and everyone is beginning to get the Christmas spirit. If the venue was highly festive and bathed in a well-designed lighting theming, and the quality of display and entertainment kept high, this would become an important seasonal tradition in Vancouver and add another layer of desired festivity in a normally wet and grey time.

Neither Vancouver nor Victoria has a Santa Claus Parade. This too may have to do with weather as much as anything else. Again, there is an opportunity for a light event. Lighted parades are less dependent on crepe and costume, and less vulnerable to rain. Such an event, possibly presented by the major department stores, would add yet another spectacle of magical celebration to the Nights of Light cityscape.

Another final idea is an outrageous and expensive one. That would be to string a line of lights outlining the skyline of the north shore mountains for the period of the Nights of Light. It is an ambitious notion but it would also bring worldwide attention to British Columbia.

Postscript

On October 28, 1987, the above review was presented in draft form to the Development Branch of the Ministry of Tourism in Victoria. Three working days later, a front page story in the Vancouver Sun reported that Tourism B.C. would return to marketing the province as "Moose, Mountains, and Mounties" because the $300,000 "cultural tourism" campaign had failed so badly.

Likely, the quotations and the intentions reported in that article were taken out of context and presented in the most sensational possible light.

Still, it was disturbing to learn that the failed cultural tourism experiment might be used as a rationale for any strategy, let alone one that seems so clearly regressive.

Surely, as it was structured, the Vancouver/Victoria Cultural Tourism Pilot Project did not have the slightest chance of success and cannot be taken as a reasonable indicator of the long-term potential of urban cultural activity to tourism marketing.

The key flaw in The Vancouver/Victoria Cultural Tourism Pilot Project was that it attempted to entice tourists into British Columbian theatre seats and measured its success on immediate dollar return.

On that basis it failed because British Columbia has so entrenched a wilderness image that Americans will not believe that our cultural product is a major reason to travel so far. They believe that have a superior cultural product right where they live.

This perception can be shifted but only with a long-term marketing program. Black cannot be made white, or even grey, by running a short-term blitz of image advertising.

So the project failed on both counts. It didn't sell tickets and it didn't affect the perception. It didn't really build on Expo 86 either, likely because the image ads were static and lacked the compelling levels of energy and festivity which did sell Expo.

The mixture of image advertising with retail specific offerings, and the mixture of cultural events with tourist attractions, made interpretation quite difficult. The results may have been even worse than reported. There is little way of knowing how many packages were sold to tourists who were coming anyhow but coincidentally discovered the promotion and took advantage of the offers. There is little way of knowing how many of the redeemed coupons were actually used by the tourists and how many were left with Vancouver families, cab drivers, waiters and others to be converted into a free admission to the Aquarium.

In the face of the Ministry's reported decision to further entrench an undesirable perception _purely_ on the basis of the above flawed experiment, it is essential to again clarify the distinctions between that program and the opportunities identified in this review.

From the beginning, this review has stressed the futility of selling specific cultural events to a market segment which is convinced of the superiority of their homegrown product.

Instead, it has responded to the evidence that the tourism growth potential can be found in a market segment which desires a mixed experience reflecting the unique qualities of the culture, the ethnic differences, the surprises, and an atmosphere which they perceive as different from that which can be found at home.

It also stresses the importance of the clean, safe and cosmopolitan urban experience. This is not because the desired market wishes a city vacation, but because the emphasis on visual communication of joyous festivity in a positive and stimulating urban environment will be the quickest route to modifying the existing hinterland perception which is seriously limiting the growth potential of the most lucrative market segment.

This review has urged the development of our culture, as opposed to our "Culture". For lack of a better term, the component involved has been described as "creative human energy" and it covers a wide range of qualities and activities. Generally, however, it refers to those aspects of the British Columbian experience which are the unique makeup of our culture.

Two days after the appearance of the Vancouver Sun "Moose, mountains, and Mounties" article, a copy of the Highlights Report of Tourism Canada's U.S.Travel Market Study was received by the author. Based on 9000 interviews, this was the largest single such study ever conducted in this country. Very little in that report contradicts or indicates a need to revise the thesis of the submitted version of this review.

Some of the key points expressed are as follows:

"The study results will surprise many readers and challenge many of the prevailing beliefs..... Canada's greatest strength is as a touring destination."

"... Canada's strength lies in the fact that it is a foriegn destination, familiar yet somehow different. The essential difference is the people of Canada, their British and French heritage, their ethnic diversity and their regional and local traditions."

"The hook is not the unspoiled wilderness, the clean, modern cities, beautiful countryside, or resorts per se, but the fact that all these attractions are in Canada, a foriegn destination that provides a different set of experiences from those offered in the U.S...we need to work together, to dispel old stereotypes ..."

"...Canada's greatest strength is the touring trip not the outdoors trip, as might have been supposed.... Although touring represents almost twice the number of trip-nights for Canada as the outdoor trip, its economic impact is even greater. Since it is less of a rubber-tire market, there are significant spinoffs for the transportation sector. Moreover, roughly half the touring vacationers are looking for first-class accommodation and food, a tendency that generates more revenues for the hospitality sector."

"In comparison to our main competition, the U.S. itself, Canada's image is weak in a number of areas....In all markets though, Canada essentially competes with domestic destinations in the United States."

"Where does Canada have an edge? Its one advantage over the U.S. as a touring destination is that it is different. It is a foriegn destination with a different culture and way of life. It is Canadian. In a touring trip, people are more likely to be looking for differences, for some foriegn mystique or cachet, something that the U.S. does not have. but which Americans think Canada possesses."

"...in 14 focus groups involving in-depth discussions with many Americans, one thing about Canada stood out as being a unique and important advantage: Americans perceive Canada's scenery and buildings as foriegn. It is Canada's people, cultures, heritage, and ethnic mosaic that makes Canada substantively different from America. It is this sense of difference that gives a foriegn destination like Canada some appeal in an otherwise home-bound U.S. market."

"In order to capture the fullest sense of a touring experience, we would expand the definition by including the human dimension and the search for difference. That is what the American traveller is saying."

"...there is one key benefit that diffentiates Canada from the U.S.: The fact that Canada is a foriegn country and is perceived as offering a different set of cultural experiences and way of life. Moreover, we are attracting a customer to Canada who particularly values the cultural factor. This segment of the U.S.travelling public is more likely to be upscale and living in major urban areas than the typical U.S. touring vacationer. For this traveller, distance to Canada is not a major barrier. Yet we have never promoted Canada's unique cultural heritage intensively in order to capitalize on its strength in this market. We clearly have a real opportunity...."

"...Canada is not as popular a destination as might have been expected among U.S.travellers taking an outdoors trip. Given the stereotype of Canada as the land of mountains, moose and Mounties, together with Canadian advertising of the great outdoors, one would think that the outdoors trip would be Canada's greatest strength. Where have we missed the mark? The answer lies both in the nature of the outdoors trip and the kind of image that Canada projects relative to its main competitor, the U.S."

"The outdoors trip is typically quite short (three to four days), and thus fairly close to home. This definition limits the potential for Canadian destinations to border areas..."

"The outdoors trip is popular with mainstream America. It is a family vacation for the family whose idea of roughing it may be having martinis out of a paper cup...for mass marketing purposes, mainstream America prefers a tamer and more sedate version of the outdoors, with more amenities."

"Relative to touring, outdoors trips contribute considerably less to the Canadian economy. Virtually all of the business comes via the rubber tire route (96 per cent), with campgrounds (65 per cent) being the primary form of accommodation."

"But herein lies the basic dilemma for Canada. Americans are at least as positive about areas available to them in their own country, which are much closer to home....The simple fact about the outdoors trip type is that the primary pursuits of swimming, walking, strolling, hunting and fishing in a beautiful natural area can be found in any of hundreds of locales in the U.S.   Canada's trees, mountains, and lakes are seen as no more or less beautiful, no more or less full of the promise of adventure, than those in the U.S."

"It seems that if we continue stereotyping Canada as a vast wilderness we may do more harm than good in attracting mainstream America, even to the outdoors segment that we were intending to appeal to."

"Where does the opportunity lie for Canada's cities? First of all there would appear to be a major gap between what Canadian cities offer in the way of amenities and attractions and how they are perceived. Much of the problem may be simple ignorance, which can be corrected over time with effective communications..."

"...there is a real opportunity to make Canadian cities larger than life by portraying them as the gateway to a broader, uniquely Canadian set of experiences, as the entry point to a touring trip. By playing on our strengths as a touring destination for Americans, and by communicating more effectively the cultural and ethnic diversity of the major cities, we can give Americans a point of differentiation or a hook to entice them to come to Canada."

At the conclusion of the study, some "Barriers and Hot Buttons" are identified.

(1) "....identifying "hot buttons" for Canada involves.... seeking out areas in which Canada can demonstrate a clear edge or advantage."

(2) "...in the touring trip...the search for differences uniquely reveals something Canada can and does offer the American traveller: A sense of foreignness, of different cultures and different ways of living. This finding explains why touring is Canada's preeminent trip type and why the single most important "hot Button" for travel to Canada is Canada's foreign mystique."

(3) "...Canada's vast wilderness image is of interest to a much smaller group of U.S.travellers than we have previously thought."

(4) "Canada does have some weakness in regard to the imagery of its infrastructure. Nowhere is the clearer than in the case of cities....There is evidence that Canada's image of vast open spaces is working against us in the city trip market and that the gap between how Canada's cities are perceived and what they do in fact offer can be closed through effective advertising and communications programs."

(5) "...issues such as climate and distance have been noted in passing...On the whole, however, other factors are of greater importance."

In the summary, four areas of emphasis and de-emphasis are listed as follows:

Should emphasize: Awareness of Canadian destinations
Canada's foreign mystique
Canada's amenities and infrastructure
Canada's beautiful,walkable cities

Should de-emphasize: Vast wilderness image
Climate
Price
Distance

The thrust of this research conducted on a national basis, seems to echo the conclusions of the California Travelers research conducted specifically for British Columbia by Stanley Plog. In the face of these findings, it is difficult to understand why their independent yet similar recommendations would be bypassed while an inconclusive exercise such as the cultural tourism project would be used to rationalize marketing strategies..